

When two elephants fight...!

*Conflict in Environmental Protection; the case of the Kakum National Park
in Ghana*



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Dedicated to Mr. Charles Brown and Mrs Alice Babson

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ABSTRACT

The thesis, “When Two Elephant Fight...!: Conflict in Environmental Conservation; the case of the Kakum National Park in Ghana”, is an analysis of the sources of conflicts between managers of the Kakum national park and local people. The study posits that there are different sources of conflict between officials, seeking to protect the environment and local people who inhabit protected areas. In relation to Kakum, the study identifies three main areas of conflicts; Perception, management and cost and benefit sharing. The study reveals that, these three areas are potential sources of conflicts and the levels of variations of these factors determine the intensity of the conflict.

Within the framework of the current discourse on environmental security, it is argued in this study that conflicts like the one in Kakum, has gross implications for the environment and hence constitutes an environmental insecurity. In all of these, the study notes that if steps are not taken to manage the conflict, it would compromise on the sustainable development objective of the country which by extrapolation has implications at the global level.

The study also reveals that a reversal of the current situation would involve three important steps; a change in the orientation of both policymakers and local people; participation of local people and; a fair distribution of the costs and benefits from conservation.

Within the current conservation paradigm of pursuing conservation with development, the study suggests that conservation policies should not be mere political slogans that become mere rhetoric. Such policies are meaningless unless they are given expression at the grass root level. These policies must have impact on the local people whose lives depend of their environment. Until these and other like policies are effected to the spirit and latter, notions such as environmental security and sustainable development will be but empty words. Nonetheless, as argued in this study, local people also need education whiles legislation relating to conservation need to be reviewed.

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Chapter 1

1.0 General Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

Conservation is a war! Once short-term interests oppose long-term interests, there's bound to be war. (Officer-In-Charge of the Kakum National park quoted from my field notes 28-06-2004)

As early as 1975, the IUCN passed a resolution at its 12th General Assembly in Kinshasa, Zaire, recognizing the value and the importance of traditional ways of life and the skills which enable local people to live in harmony with their environment. The same resolution was recalled in 1982 at the World National Parks congress in Bali, Indonesia, which affirmed the rights of traditional societies to 'social, economic, cultural and spiritual self determination' and 'to participate in decisions affecting the land and natural resources on which they depend. The resolution further advocated the implementation of joint management arrangements between societies that have traditionally managed their resources in protected areas (Colchester 1997). At the turn of the century, all these seem to have been rhetoric since many indigenous people continue to suffer in diverse ways from conservation projects. The indigenous people of Abrafo and Mfuom who live by the Kakum national park are no exception to this case. Kemp's (1993) book, "protecting indigenous people in protected areas; the law of the mother" suggests that there are many indigenous people all over the world today who have suffered from having their areas of residence converted to protected areas. While in some cases there were fierce disputes others have been subtle.

Fonseca (2004) have observed that the establishment of the first national park, the Yosemite in Sierra Nevada in California resulted in a conflict between forces sanctioned by the US government and the Miwok people who inhabited the place because these Indians were asked to leave their homeland. Their eviction from the park deprived them

of their traditional hunting, grazing areas, fish runs and nuts. This precedence continues to be replicated in many parts of the world today.

In Africa, the history of protected areas can be traced back to pre-colonial times when colonial authorities established parks and gardens as hunting grounds. The establishment of hunting grounds was to a large extent influenced by ideas of dominating nature as the 'wild'; a characteristic feature of the philosophy of nature during the ancient period in Europe¹ (Coates 1998). The idea of conquering nature which emerged in the middle ages can not be separated from the protected area ideology that was to take place later in places like Africa.

The establishment of protected areas in many parts of Africa can also be situated within the evolutionary thinking of most colonialists, whose vision of superiority manifested in many colonial policies. Anker (2004) in his article titled 'the politics of ecology in South Africa on the radical left' reveals how evolutionary ideas were brought to bear on the race policy of apartheid in South Africa. The feeling of racial superiority informed by Darwinist ideologies² influenced colonial policy in terms of deciding what was right for the colonised. Often times these policies did not take into account the context-specific nature of local processes. This top-down approach of colonial policy decision-making was adopted by the elites who inherited it from the colonial regime and has been the bane of many policies in Africa since independence.

Today, protected areas and reserves have become a major source of rural tension in many developing countries (Pimbert & Ghimire 1997). Even though some of this tension has been well managed, its impact on protected area projects and on society has been great. There are various accounts of the causes of these conflicts. Some of the often cited reasons include eviction of indigenous people from their land, inadequate education of local people, and exclusion of local people in the planning and implementation of projects among others.

This study is about culture and conflicts in protected areas. It is an attempt to examine the sources of conflict between local people and managers of protected areas and how

¹ For a detailed account of the Western attitude to Nature see Peter Coates' book; *Nature* published in 1998.

² Darwinist ideology particularly influenced colonial policy in South Africa and the subsequently, the apartheid regime that followed. See Anker, P. 2004

this impacts on local people, their daily routines and their survival strategies. It focuses on the various sources of conflicts that occur between local people and the managers of the national park. Three major interrelated areas are identified as the major sources of conflict. These are perception, cost and benefit disparity and the management tenure. These three areas of conflict significantly have a bearing on the way of life of the people living around the Kakum National Park.

1.2 Justification for the Study

With the demarcation of areas as protected in Ghana, local people have been affected in many ways. 'Local knowledge systems, social networks, daily routines, learning processes, gender relations, kinship roles, distributive roles, religious perspectives, customs and beliefs' have been affected (IUCN 1992:47). On the other hand protected areas have experienced high levels of 'encroachment' from various sections of the public: farmers, chain-saw operators, bush meat hunters, *et cetera*. The activities of these people have become a *vis major* to the objectives of the parks. People still want to take from the commons which leads to conflicts of various forms.

Even though demarcating areas as protected is not a new phenomenon in Ghana, the rate of proliferation in recent decades is unprecedented in the history of protected areas in the country. From a total number of about 5 in 1985, the current number of protected areas in Ghana stands at about 18 with the possibility that more would be created in the near future. The creation of some of these parks involved fierce confrontations between local people and managers of these parks. Elsewhere, local people continue to battle out with officials of parks or protected areas³. Protected areas are increasingly disrupting people's livelihoods.

The creation of the Kakum national park has become a source of social and cultural conflict among local people and between local people and park officials. Culturally, local people have been affected in ways that compensation cannot substitute. Some of the issues involved are not quantifiable or are invaluable despite the fact that there have been situations where local people have demanded compensation for damage to crops and

³ An example is the Kalakpa reserve where local residents continue to battle with conservation authorities.

property. The intensity of the conflict can be measured by the fact that it has led to the death of one park official who was killed by angry villagers. In all of this, the park officials believe that local people are the cause of their own problems. As the officer-in-charge of the park puts it;

...if you make your farm near where the elephants feed and they (the elephants) come to destroy your hut and crops, 'na who cause am?'⁴

The local people are dissatisfied with the current *modus operandi*. This being the case, it is important for society to understand the sources of the conflict that exists between these local people and the national park managers. To ensure the sustainability of protected areas as one of the ways of ameliorating our current global environmental crisis, it is important to understand the nature of such conflicts. Mfuom and Abrafo which are two important villages lying at the interface of the Kakum national park are used as case study areas to examine the social and cultural conflicts in protected areas with the local people of these two villages and the official of the park as the subjects to be studied. The Kakum national park is situated in the central region of Ghana. More precisely, it is located in the Twifo-Hemang district, which is situated in the forest belt of the country. The entire area under protection is referred to as the Kakum and Assin-Attandanso forest reserve and the Kakum national park is situated within this reserve.

1.3 Objective of the study

To ensure the successful implementation of protected areas projects in Ghana, it is important for researchers to study the sources of conflicts in protected areas and how local people have been affected since this would serve as a baseline for designing future policies on protected areas. The study therefore hopes to contribute in this direction. It examines the sources of conflicts between managers of the Kakum national park and the local people *vis a vis* the extent to which local customs, values, routines, norms *et cetera* have been affected among the people of Mfuom and Abrafo.

⁴ 'na who cause am?' is an expression from the West African pidgin English meaning, 'who's the cause of it?'

The main question to be addressed in this study is; *what are the sources of conflict between managers of the Kakum national park and the local people and how has the creation of the park impacted on local people?* To be able to answer this question, there is the need to ask further questions. These questions are situated within the preliminary presentation of theory I present below.

1.4 Preliminary presentation of theory

1.4.1 An Overview

At the turn of the century, one of the issues that have been at the forefront of developmental and environmental discourse has been how to manage the world's resources, both natural and human, in ways that would ensure their continuous flow. The 'tragedy of the commons' was one of the influential theories that came up during this period. In sum, the tragedy of the commons argues that if a resource is open to all, due to the rational inclination of each individual and the desire to optimize acquisition, the resource would eventually be destroyed. Thus freedom of the commons brings ruin to all. This theory received a number of criticisms. One of such criticism was by Feeney and others (1990) who argued that though freedom of the common might bring ruin to all, this would not occur because of the rational abilities of men to impose upon themselves restrictions that would regulate the use of the commons. They identified various kinds of ownership regimes under which exclusion may ensure the sustainable use of the 'commons'. This included establishing a private property regime, communal property *et cetera*.

Another theory that received much attention was the Malthusian population theory. Malthus argued that since population naturally tends to grow exponentially, a finite world can only support a finite population therefore, he concludes that eventually, population growth must be equal to zero which is the optimum population size. Furthermore, for biological reasons, the growth of population may not be healthy since the amount of 'work' and 'maintenance' of an individual cannot be met. In a nutshell, this theory seeks to postulate that if population increases at an exponential rate, given a constant level of resources (mostly environmental) there may be oblivion. This theory was also criticized

on the grounds that it was too theoretical and therefore not applicable in real life situation. In addition, the theory assumes that the environmental resources are finite which is without any scientific basis.

In spite of what their critics say, these two theories have influenced the way people think about environmental issues in an unprecedented way in environmental history. They drew attention to the fact that there is a limit to which man could progress or at least there was the need to put in place certain restrictive mechanism to ensure that the earth was able to maintain its 'carrying capacity'. Today, we have had to come to terms with a new developmental paradigm whose meaning is so diverse yet it forms the basis for formulating both developmental and environmental policies, this new paradigm is what has been referred to as sustainable development. But the big question is; what is sustainable development?

1.4.2 Sustainable Development as a Concept

The concept of sustainable development is not new and remains a disputed concept. The concept can be traced to the earliest human civilization and the perennial tension between population growth and economic development on the one hand and the use of natural resources and ecosystems on the other. Even though its modern understanding is associated with the Brundtland report of 1987, it has its origin from the 1972 World Conference on Human Environment. The Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987). Though this appears to be the generally accepted definition of the term sustainable development, scholars are still unsettled about what the term actually connotes⁵. Knutsen (1999) observes that 'the contents of sustainable development seem to move along a continuum'. At one end it deals with conservation while on the other end it deals with the people who depend on it.

In spite of the fact that the definition of the term sustainable development is still being debated, most governments and the development community accept the definition of the

⁵ For different perspectives on the debates on sustainable development see; Holmberg (1992), Brown (1996), Becker and Jahn (1994), Redclift (1987), Reid (1995), McLaughlin (1993)

WCED as a point of departure hence the basis for the formulation of global policies on the environment such as the protected areas policy. The acceptance or adoption of this definition has two basic implications;

- Meeting the vital needs of the poor and;
- Limiting the constraints imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

If one accepts the concept of sustainable development in principle, it unequivocally embodies the requirement of meeting these two needs. It presupposes that development can not be made sustainable if it fails to take the vital needs of the poor into account in formulating development and environment policies. It is based on the assumption that there is a (direct) correlation between environmental degradation and poverty. The implication is that by meeting the needs of the poor, environmental problems to some extent are being solved conterminously.

Meeting the needs of the poor must not only be situated in local perspective but it must also be looked at in the context of the global framework. Most developing countries have advocated for a review of the global economic system which impose restriction on them as a panacea to alleviating poverty- meeting the needs of the poor. The current global order puts most developing countries at the disadvantage end thus compounding (by implication) environmental problems. This is an issue that has received little attention in environmental circles but which is also crucial in the context of the global ecological crisis.

Within the context of sustainable development therefore, it is important to understand how to proceed with conservation in order to avoid conflicts between local people and conservationists.

1.4.3 Protected Areas; a Social Space

A Protected Area is an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means. This means that protected areas need not

be limited to state-sponsored reserves, but can include those managed by indigenous communities, private landowners, industrial holdings and others (Dudley et al 1998). Protected areas have made significant contributions in conserving biodiversity and preserving species.

The concept of protected areas is evolving. From the original idea of wilderness preservation, protected area managers are now seeking to integrate conservation with development. The traditional ways of managing protected areas where protected areas were viewed as areas distinct from human settlement is giving way to a more adaptive form of management where local people are involved in the creation and management of the protected areas. This management practice is in line with the resolution adopted at the Bali Conference⁶ in 1992 which sought to integrate conservation with development. At this conference, it was consensual that if conservation is to succeed, it must be in line with the developmental objectives of various communities. The focus of protected areas is also shifting from individual protected areas and towards protected area networks as parts of a landscape or bioregional approach to planning.

Protected areas can be described as a ‘social space’. The notion of protected areas as a social space was put forward in a book edited by Pimbert and Ghimire (1997) titled “Social Change and Conservation”. They argue that “Protected areas are socially constructed and preserved” (*ibid*: 5). Their very definition as a vast ‘undisturbed’ area with unique wildlife species and spectacular sceneries means that protected areas are a construction. The terms ‘protection’, ‘preservation’ and ‘conservation’ lend credence to the notion of protected areas as a social space. In the context in which they are used, they imply that certain natural areas are kept away from public demand. The words ‘park’ and ‘reserve’ also have their origins from the Latin words *parricus* meaning ‘enclosure’ and *reservare* meaning ‘save’ respectively. In this way, protected areas include forests, rivers, aesthetic site, and places of cultural importance.

Ecosystems and biodiversity are constantly changing. Even without the intervention of man, they will still change. But, it is important to mention that humans have played an important role in shaping natural landscape. The notion of pristine nature fails to take into

⁶ The Bali conference refers to the 1982 World National Parks congress in Bali, Indonesia,

account the role played by human being as part of the species inhabiting the ecosystem. Evidence shows that those places considered as pristine by conservationist were once inhabited by human beings (*ibid*).

The protection and use of certain natural species have resulted in conflicts. However, the arguments put forward by the current environmental movement for the creation of protected areas have very disturbing underlying assumptions. One such assumption is the assignment of intrinsic value to non-human nature. Some people especially those living in poor countries find the idea of biocentric egalitarianism⁷ meaningful in so far as their basic needs are met.

1.4.4 Cost and benefits Imbalance as a Source of Social and Cultural Conflict in Protected areas.

“Conflict is a very fluid and ambiguous word” (Upreti 2001:44) Conflicts can refer to a debate or a contest; a disagreement, argument, dispute, quarrel; a struggle, battle or confrontation; or a state of unrest, turmoil, chaos and violence (Warner 2001 cited in Upreti 2002). According to sociologists, conflicts in society are inevitable. Conflicts are indispensable aspects of social relations. Most definitions of conflicts depict a type of reasoning indicating that conflicts exist when two or more actors wish to carry out acts which are incompatible. In this sense, Upreti adds, each party perceives the other as an obstacle to reach that goal. This goal can be tangible (land) or intangible and followed by aggression (Lopez 2001).

System theorists observe that conflict is a permanent feature of any open system. This is due to the constant interaction among elements within the system. From this perspective conflict is an endemic aspect of life which occurs at all levels of society. Conflict therefore cannot be abolished in society however, they can be minimized (Lopez 2001).

Protected areas have become a major source of rural tension in most developing countries (Pimbert & Ghimire 1997). This can be attributed to the fact that the costs and benefits in the creation of protected areas are imbalanced as they stand today.

⁷ Biocentric egalitarianism is the idea that all living being in the biosphere are equal and thus should be given equal moral status.

Whether real or perceived, the reasons for the occurrence of these conflicts are varied. In some cases, the conflicts result from disagreements and disputes over management and the use of natural resources. Increased competition for natural resources among multiple stakeholders with diverse interests occurring worldwide within the current trends of globalization, democratization and urbanization have also led to some conflicts. Along with these new needs and opportunities there are often tensions and conflicts, including disagreements over access rights and lack of consensus on the management objectives of protected areas. Rising tensions and disputes can undermine the formal and informal institutions and rules that govern resource use, resulting in environmental degradation and economic decline.

The effective long-term conservation of wildlife in and around protected areas requires the support of people who experience the direct impacts of the establishment and management of these areas (Kiss, 1990). Local people cannot be expected to provide this support if the costs of doing so outweigh the benefits, i.e. if the existence of the protected area and its wildlife have negative impacts on local livelihoods (Murphree 1996). An understanding of the relationship between a protected area and its surrounding human population in terms of these costs and benefits is therefore crucial to the design and implementation of projects seeking to promote conservation with development (Newmark et al 1994).

Conflict in conservation becomes inevitable when the cost and benefit of conservation are not evenly borne by the various stakeholders. As it is now, 'the costs and benefits of conservation vary considerably between different sectors of society, both national and international. The costs in terms of alienated land, restrictions on resource use and damage to life and property are mainly carried by rural people particularly those at the interface between settlement and conservation areas (Anderson & Grove 1987). The benefits of aesthetics and recreational experiences and scientific opportunities are enjoyed mainly by foreigners. The political and financial costs of administering conservation program are mainly carried by national governments. The benefits of national prestige and revenues from the use of wildlife resources are also carried by the national governments' (Anderson & Grove 1987:80).

Pimbert and Ghimire (1997) have also observed that the gains of preservationist mode of intervention have tended to be one-sided going mainly to external groups interested in conservation and not to local people. Local communities are those who bare the hardship through loss of access to resources, damage to crops and through the dangers posed by wild animals. With the current distribution of cost and benefits of conservation, local people are the bearers of most part of the cost.

It has been observed that there are basic human needs which are essential in ensuring the stability of society. If these needs are not met, the stability of society could be disrupted leading to conflicts of various forms. Some of these basic needs include belongingness/love, security, identity, self-esteem, personal fulfillment, distributive justice, cultural security and participation. In undertaking conservation programmes, some of these vital needs of some people have been affected and in many other cases taken away from them completely. Human needs theorists providing an alternative dimension to conflicts theory note that there are negotiable and non-negotiable needs and these differ from interests. These are in important in lieu of conflicts that emanate from conservation programmes. As mentioned above, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) notes that in the establishment of protected areas, 'local knowledge systems, social networks, daily routines, learning processes, gender relations, kinship roles, distributive roles, religious perspectives customs and beliefs' have been affected tremendously. These aspects of a people's life when affected, from a human needs perspective, have the potential of causing conflicts.

Having understood the concept of sustainable development, protected areas and conflicts, it is important to mention that the creation of protected areas as one of the measures to ensure sustainable development requires that the sources of conflicts are understood.

1.5 Research questions

On the basis of the preliminary presentation of theory presented above, it is important to ask further questions to help identify the sources of conflict in Kakum. These questions include;

- a) To what extent can the conflict in Kakum be attributed to differences in perceptions on the environment?
- b) How does cost and benefit disparities lead to conflicts
- c) To what extent have local people been involved in the management of the Kakum national park?

1.6 Structure of Thesis

I start the thesis by looking at the background to protected areas and the conflicts that are associated with it. I observe that although the idea of the protected area establishment has good intentions for the environment, its implementation has often led to conflicts. In chapter two, I put Ghana in perspective as well as describe my research area. The theoretical framework is looked at in chapter three. Here, I combine three concepts- perceptions, management and environmental security- from different disciplines to understand the possible sources of conflicts in protected areas. Chapter four and five deal with the analyses of data and then in chapter six, I draw my conclusions and make appropriate recommendations.

1.7 Entering the Field

Given the complex nature of the research problem and the fact that environmental conflicts are often multi-layered I opted for an interdisciplinary research method. I am guided by McNeil & other's (2001) admonition that in studying the relationship between humans and their natural environment, an interplay of disciplines from a number of social sciences is vital. This means that I will draw on disciplines like anthropology, international relations, sociology, psychology and environmental studies to understand the nature of conflict at Kakum. How am I going to do this? The conflict in Kakum is not just over access to natural resources. It is one that emanates from differences in

perception; differences in management tenure; cost and benefits disparities; and total neglect of local people. Therefore, different theoretical concepts would be borrowed from different disciplines to address the issues involved.

I will borrow theoretical concepts such as security which pertained to the domain of the discipline of international relations. Thus environmental security which is a security concept will help to explain that the conflict in Kakum is not just a mere conflict but rather, the conflict has gross ramifications for local, regional and national security. Again, perception, which lies within the realms of cognitive psychology, would be drawn upon to explain that difference in perception on the environment is a potential source of conflict. At the core of the study nevertheless is an environmental issue- a conflict that has implications for sustainable development. With this approach, I am able to understand the conflict in Kakum from different disciplinary perspectives.

Essentially the study is a qualitative one. In sum, a qualitative research ‘focuses on the experiences, interpretations, impressions or motivations of an individual or individuals, and seeks to describe how people view things and why. It relates to beliefs, attitudes and changing behaviour’⁸. Understanding how differences in perception and cost and benefit imbalance can be a source of conflict means that a qualitative approach to data collection and analyses is indispensable.

Perhaps it is important to mention that most part of my study would be a descriptive analysis of the sources of conflict and on the basis on these descriptive analyses I shall make prescriptions or a series of recommendations. The debate on the distinction between the descriptive and prescriptive approaches is quite vibrant within academic circles but it is not my intention to go into the details of the debate (Dokken 1997)⁹. It would be descriptive in the sense that I attempt to describe the various sources of conflict that exist between local people and park managers. I would try to explore the extent to which the

⁸This definition is taken from www.cirem.org.uk/definitions.html

⁹ (See *ibid*): Dokken gives a detailed overview of the debate on *Descriptive/Prescriptive* or *Normativism/Positivism* distinction. She argues that though scholars like David Hume distinguish between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ sometimes this distinction is blurred. It is sometimes difficult to discern the ‘is’ from the ‘ought’. Again, she observes that by focusing too much on the distinction one overlooks the role of evaluation in [political] analysis (but I also find it applicable to my case though it is not purely political).

questions raised above lead to conflict and on the basis of my findings, I would then make appropriate prescriptions.

The study is based on a case study of the Kakum National Park which has Mfuom and Abrafo as two of the important villages lying on its interface. A case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. Alternatively, a case study can be defined as ‘a method of sociological analysis of socio-cultural phenomena to draw inferences and to formulate proposition’ (Mitchell 1983; cited in Upreti 2002). It is a method that enables you to undertake an in-depth study of a particular object of enquiry. Yin (1994) notes that the use of case study is important when questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has a little or no control are being dealt with. The advantage of using a case study method in a study of this sort is that it allows for an investigation into the ongoing environmental conflict within a real life context. Further, my control over the subjects being studied is little so it makes the information obtained more original. Case studies typically examine the interplay of variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of an event or situation as possible.

The option of using a case study approach is also influenced by the theoretical perspective and the research problem I am dealing with. The choice of Kakum in relation to Abrafo and Mfuom is based on three main reasons. These include;

1. Kakum national park is assumed to be one of the successful protected areas not only in Ghana but in the West African sub-region;
2. The presence of conflict in the area as continuously reported by various newspapers in Ghana especially the ‘Daily Guide’¹⁰.
3. Thirdly it is a geographically convenient place to conduct the research as well as linguistically conducive because I am able to understand the language of the local people.

¹⁰ Daily Guide is one of the private newspapers in Ghana.

Data was collected from the study areas in Ghana in the summer of 2004 from the villages of Mfuom and Abrafo which are two of the main villages situated near the Kakum National Park.

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary data I used focused group discussions, key informant interviews, participant observation and face to face interviews (with policy makers) and interviews with ‘well-informed respondents.

One of the challenging issues I had to deal with was how to enter the towns – Abrafo and Mfuom. This was very important because these towns have had experiences of researchers coming to promise them ‘silver’ and ‘gold’¹¹ and in all cases they experienced disappointments. I therefore had to deal with the difficult task of changing that perception. The queen mother of Mfuom who seemed furious noted that;

[p]eople like you always come here to ask us many questions about our problems and promise to solve them only to disappoint us in the end. We have therefore decided not to entertain the likes of you (quoted from field notes 15-06-05).

To deal with this perception I decided to first make them understand that I was a student and needed the information for my school project. I explained to them that I was not in the position to provide any solution to their problems. At the very minimum, as I told them, I could highlight their grievances through a newspaper article to draw the attention of policy makers to their plight. The Queen mother and the chief warmly received me for my “truthfulness and ‘frankness’”.¹² They were my first point of contact after having spoken to a young man who led me to them. That way I legitimized my stay in the village.

To ensure an effective data collection, the informants were divided into four main categories. These were; a) the elite group comprising the park managers, b) government officials and some politicians, c) local people- mostly ordinary uneducated farmers and

¹¹ ‘Silver and gold’ is a metaphoric way of saying that earlier researcher promised to solve their problems

¹²“Truthfulness and frankness” are the directly translated words of the Queen mother of Mfuom.

forest guards and d) tourists both local and foreign. I categorized my informants or interviewees into these groups because I wanted to find out the degree of variability of notions like perception among different categories of people. For instance, the notion of environmental crisis varies significantly depending on where one belongs - be it an elite or a local. This would be clearer in later chapters where it is shown that cost and benefit vary among various groups of people.

One of the main tools I used in gathering my data was focused group discussions. A total of 10 groups were interviewed; each group consisting of 6 people. In all 60 people were interviewed and these were ordinary people of the area who were sometimes playing draught or doing other hobbies. Focused interviews were also organized with tourists who were visiting the park on the 1st of July being Ghana's republic day and a bank holiday for that matter. This was an opportune time to interview tourists both local and foreign because turnout is normally high on such occasions.

Key informant interviews were also conducted among assemblymen of the areas, the chiefs and opinion leaders, the linguists (Chief's spokesperson) and people who were regarded as successful farmers in the areas. Others included former park guards, current park guards and some old folks of the towns.

I also employed participant observation technique as part of my data collection procedures. In this regard, I lived with the local people for three weeks during which I went about their daily routines with them. I lived in a nearby town but visited them when I had to because I had to interview some other officials who lived in the capital. While living with them, I sometimes visited their farms with them especially those on the boundary of the park to observe various phenomena like farms destroyed by elephants.

I also used direct observation to verify what they told me. Where necessary, I took photographs because I believed it would help me convey important characteristics of the area to my readers as suggested by Yin (1994).

Interviews were conducted with Officer-in-Charge of the park, some officials of the Department of Game and Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission and officials of Conservation International who are also supporting the National Park project at Kakum. The interviews were conducted through structured questions which I had prepared for

myself. Further question were derived from the answers they gave me during interview sessions.

Data was also collected from secondary sources from various libraries and others sources¹³.

1.7.1 Methodological Setbacks

The data collection process suffered a number of setbacks. One of the main practical problems was inadequate resource. One of the important resources that was essentially lacking was time. A study of this sort requires more time in the field to study various phenomena *in toto*. An examination of how local people have been affected requires time especially when the focus is on culture. This is because there are varied aspects of people's lives which unfold with time. This was lacking because I had only eight weeks to spend in the field.

Another resource that was essentially lacking was funds. The stipend allocated for the field trip was woefully inadequate considering the fact that my expenditure during the fieldwork was high. I had little money to conduct the research and this limited mobility, access to certain people and places.

Another problem that cannot escape being mentioned is the unwillingness of some public officials to avail themselves to be interviewed. They took me through tortuous bureaucratic procedures and in some cases, I could not get the chance to interview them. This limited my ability to get varied perspectives from this group.

Lastly, there were difficulties in accessing information. Within the setting where I collected data, some officials were unwilling to grant me interview, others were 'afraid' to release information that were considered classified. The reasons for these are varied. To the ordinary worker it was for job security. For the policymakers in high positions, it was for political reasons. Nevertheless, generally, people are cautious with the release of

¹³ For my secondary data, apart from using the library at the University (Oslo), the library of the Ghana Wildlife Society was of invaluable help. Other libraries included the Office of Parliament Library, the George Padmore Memorial Research Library on African Affairs and the Environmental Protection Agency library. The following secondary sources were used; internet sources, journals, newspapers, travel guides, annual reports, brochures, news magazines and information written on notice boards, Legislative Instruments and Acts of Parliament.

information and this limited my ability to access information. In this respect, I could not reveal the names of some of the people I interviewed because it is important for their job security and safety.

Notwithstanding these setbacks, I strove to ensure that the data collected were as valid and accurate as possible. But what is validity and reliability in research? Validity and reliability are important concepts as far as an assessment of a research project is concerned. A study is valid if its measures actually measure what they claim to, and if there are no logical errors in drawing conclusion from data (Oliver 1997). There are many different types of validities but they all deal with threats and biases that undermine the meaningfulness of research. Reliability on the other hand is used to measure the extent to which an item, scale or instrument will yield the same score when administered in different times, locations, or populations, when the two administrations do not differ in relevant variables.

Reliability of a research or a study is influenced by factors such as the gender of the researcher, perception of the informants towards the researcher, how the researcher relates to the local people and other factors such as the personal characteristics of the researcher that appeals to his/her informants. These factors can militate against the replicability of a research and the outcome thereto. Also, the use of structured interviews where follow up questions are deduced from questions posed affect the replicability of a study. Taking these factors into account, replicability in this study is only in an experimental sense. As noted by Jacobsen (note dated), in a qualitative study, 'the satisfactoriness of the explanation is what counts not the power of the methods in deriving it'. What is important is that the data is representative of the true picture of the constructs under investigation.

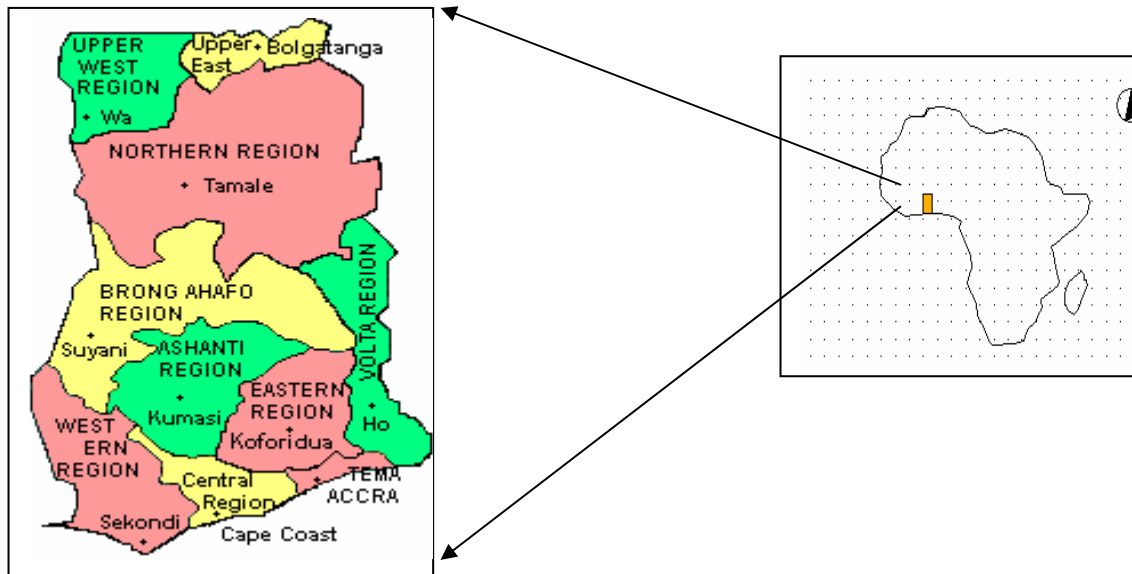
Chapter 2

2.0 Description of Research Area

2.1 Ghana: An Overview

Ghana is a former British colony located on the west coast of Africa below the Sahara desert. It is situated between latitude 4 and 11 degrees. It became independent in 1957 and then a republic in 1960. After going through tortuous moments of political struggle characterised by coup d'états interspersed with civilian regimes, it returned to constitutional rule in 1992. The current political dispensation can be described as a democracy with a two party system of government. The two main parties are the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party. There are other small parties which are considered noncompetitive but their proliferation over the years have made them significant because of the number of votes they are able to pull during general elections. This has made merger a feature of Ghanaian politics.

Ghana has a land surface area of about 238,537 square kilometers. It is divided into ten (10) administrative regions which are further divided into 110 districts.



*Fig. 1 Showing the 10 Administrative regions of Ghana;
Source; Nsiah- Gyabaah (1996)*

The population of Ghana based on the 2000 population census is approximately 20.2 million people with a population growth rate of about 2.4% per annum. It has a population density of about 78.9 square kilometers. The country has experienced a continuous population growth rate since the 1970s to date. The population is projected to reach 36.9 million by 2015. Average life expectancy in terms of male and female is about 58.3 and 61.8 respectively. Total fertility rate is 5.15 while infant mortality is also about 56 deaths out of a thousand births (UNFPA 2000). Below is the population trend from 1970 to 1996 showing the steady rate of population increase.

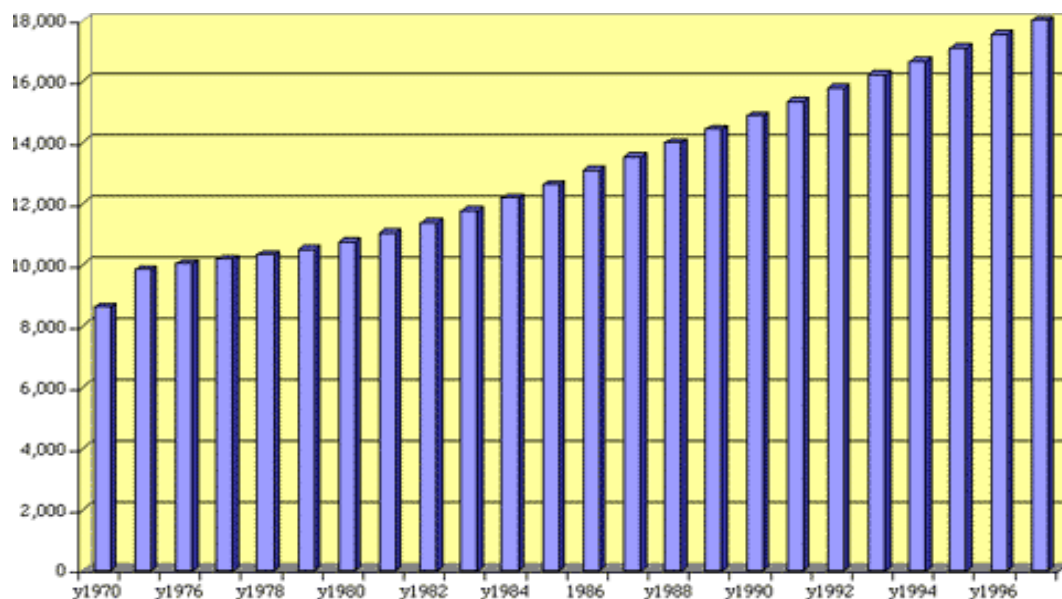


Fig. 2 Population distribution from 1970 to 1996 showing the growth rate over the period. Source; (UNFPA 2000)

Ghana is an agriculture based economy with about 50% of the population engaged in farming (including fishing and forestry). Agriculture also accounts for about 36% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The domestic economy revolves around subsistence agriculture which has small land holdings as one of its features. Industry contributes about 5% to the gross domestic product of the country that grows at an average rate of 5.7% (quote from live coverage of 2002 budget).

Ghana hosts about 2 million hectares of tropical rain forest which is part of the upper Guinea moist forest ecosystem, stretching through Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and

Cote d'Ivoire. The country may be divided into six major ecological zones as shown in the figure below. It includes the high rainforest, semi-deciduous rainforest, forest savanna transition zone, Guinea savanna, Sudan savanna and coastal savanna. The vegetation has largely influenced the population distribution of the country such that in the rainforest areas human settlement is high and low settlements in the savanna.

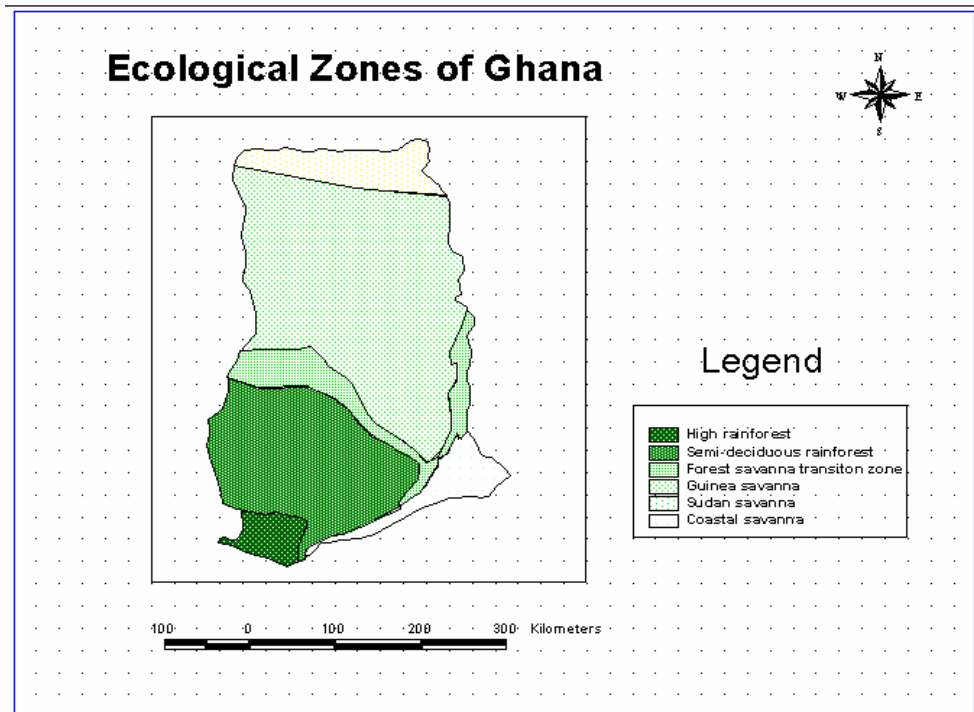


Fig 3 Showing the Ecological Zones of Ghana (Source: Nsiah-Gyabaah 1996)

Increased pressures on these resources in the past decades have led to challenges for the Ghanaian government- pursuing economic development while at the same time promoting and maintaining biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health.

2.2 Development and Policy Framework of Conservation in Ghana

Nsiah-Gyabaah (1994) records that Ghana's environmental problems did not receive much attention and publicity until the United Nations Sudano-sahelian office took responsibility for monitoring desertification in the sahelian and sub-Saharan Africa after the catastrophic droughts of the 1960s. Although concerns had been expressed about the

degradation of non-renewable resources and serious environmental problems resulting from human activities, political instability and socio-economic problems of the country delayed environmental action until the 1970s when an exceptionally severe drought which began in 1968 affected about six million people and their livestock in sahelian Africa.

The effects of the drought was felt throughout Ghana drawing people's attention to the severity and the closeness of environmental problems *vis à vis* its effects. The reality of environmental degradation and its consequences was now accepted. Climatic changes which led to declining rainfall and extreme rainfall variability and population pressure intensified deforestation and reduced the fallow period which is crucial for soil regeneration. The forests and woodlands which are central to the economic and ecological life of Ghanaians were also declining both quantitatively and qualitatively and could no longer provide protection against soil erosion in fragile ecosystems (Nsiah-Gyabaah 1994).

It is against this background that a commission was set up to investigate the extent of impact of the draught on agriculture and rural development. Following the commission's report, it became apparent that the impact of the drought was intense and the need for a policy in that direction was imminent. Subsequently, several governments in cooperation with development partners have attempted to put measures in place to avert further degradation of the environment.

Two programmes, the Programme of Action to Meet the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) and the Economic Recovery Programme, were fashioned with the International Monetary Fund's conditionalities to help reduce the negative effects on the environment. These programmes were weak in the sense that instead of ameliorating the environmental problems they rather aggravated them. It led to increased hardship for the masses who had to return to the land. Gyabaah (1994) notes that, the structural adjustment policies created a major rift between people and natural resources and accelerated the rate of environmental degradation. Critics of the resource exploitative policies believed that for development to be sustainable, a strategy to anticipate and

prevent degradation and to transform people's attitude and perception about the environment was required to overcome the environmental problems of tomorrow.

Many regions in Ghana today face the problem of environmental degradation and how local people should respond to it is still a matter for environmental planners to determine. While the importance of impact assessment and local participation has been stressed in various fora, they have been ignored in policy planning.

Ghana's environment especially the north savanna and the woodlands are being degraded at an alarming rate but there is very little empirical understanding of the complex processes, temporary variations of the scale of degradation or the long-term cost and benefits of ecological destruction (cited from the North-east Savanna Project, CSIR, Accra, Ghana). Ghana's environment is suffering the effects of dramatic changes; its forests have been degraded in the savanna and the savanna areas are fast turning into desert. The degradation of the environment constitutes a serious threat to Ghana's productive base, food self-sufficiency, social welfare and the sustainable development of the rural areas. Appropriate techniques, policies and strategies for dealing with environmental degradation at the grass root are either missing or not disseminated effectively to local people and rural development planners. It is against this background that conservation in Ghana is being pursued vigorously.

The conservation policy objective of the late 90s has been aptly stipulated in the Ghana-Vision 2020 (1997). Ghana-Vision 2020 can best be described as a development plan aimed at ensuring a long-term path to prosperity. The document envisions a Ghana that is socially and materially better off, and in which its people are able to face the challenges of the new century with greater confidence and more knowledge to make choices that affect their lives. It further identifies the major environmental problems or issues as follows;

- Depletion of forest cover, leading to loss of soil fertility, natural sink for carbon dioxide, water resources and desertification;
- Unsustainable extraction rates of timber and other forest resources;

- Destruction of the forest resources base by excessive logging, land clearing for agriculture or bush burning as part of the traditional system of land preparation for shifting cultivation and mining and quarrying;
- Increasing demand for wood fuel which accounts for over 80% of Ghana's energy consumption
- Indiscriminate use of land; and
- Loss of biodiversity

These, as exemplified by the document, are 'threats to the sustainability' of the nation's resources. To reduce the problem or reverse the trend, the medium term plan of the Vision 2020 aims at ensuring "a sustainable basis for ... conservation of the environment, thereby maximizing the rate of social and economic development of the country and securing optimum welfare and adequate means of livelihood for all Ghanaians" (Ghana Vision 2020, 1997:121). To achieve this objective, the document provides for the consolidation of protected area management and initiating sustainable utilisation of wildlife resources for increased benefits to rural communities while conserving biological diversity.

2.3 Legal Framework for Protected Area Establishment in Ghana

Both documented and undocumented sources have it that the history of conservation in Ghana can be traced to the olden days when sacred groves and shrines were established in various communities and societies. The underlying reason for the establishment of these groves and shrines was purely conservational though in some instances other reasons were cited as the reason for conservation. For example from my interactions with the Gas of coastal Ghana who make up most of the fishing communities, it is forbidden to fish on Tuesdays. Even though the reason is to allow fishes to recuperate, locals are made to believe that one would drown because the sea becomes turbulent on Tuesdays. Thus, though certain practices had conservational motives, these motives were obscured.

The first codification of conservation legislation in Ghana can be traced back to 1900 when the Timber and Trees Ordinance was promulgated (Laing 1994). Subsequently, this legislation which covered both forest and wildlife has evolved through amendment,

deletion and revisions. As of now, the principal legislation governing wildlife conservation in Ghana is the Wild Animals Preservation Act, 1961 (Act 43) (*ibid*). The essence of this legislation is very much like the Wild Animals Preservation Ordinance and the 1900 London Convention for the preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa from which both originated. The London Conservation provides as follows;

[T]he preservation of Wild Animals considered useful or inoffensive to man; the concept of “nuisance or inoffensive species” in respect of which measures might or needed to be taken to reduce their numbers, and a recommendation for the constitution of game reserves (Laing 1994:174).

The Wildlife Conservation Regulation 1971 (LI 685) provided the instrument for translating new attitude on legislations and replacing outmoded schedules to the Act (Act 43). It has been noted that since the policy is to establish reserves ‘by proclamation’, no general legal procedures for their constitution is provided. In practice, the establishment of wildlife reserves has involved acquisition by state with consequent payment of compensation to the land and resource owners.

Under this policy framework, four different types of designations are given to the reserves named in the Regulation. These include National Parks, Strict Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuary and Game Protection Reserves. Apart from these categorizations, no concrete definitions are given to these designations and this is an inadequacy in the legislation. This stems from the fact that much room is left for conservation officials to provide their own definitions and categories accordingly.

In addition to the above, there is also what is referred to as the Trees and Timber Decree, 1974 (NRCD 273) under which certain categories of protected areas are established. This provision was first introduced in 1959 under the Protected Timber Land Acts (No. 34 of 1954). It allows areas with goods stocking of trees to be protected against cultivation.

One of the main strength of the legislation is that it is malleable and wide enough to accommodate changes in attitudes about preservation of wild animals to conservation of wildlife. However, it was weak in the sense that it gave too much attention to wild

animals to the detriment of wild plants. For instance the schedules to Act 43 strictly relate to animals. There are several articles that also relate to animals.

Apart from local legislations, Ghana is party to a number of international conventions concerned with protected areas, namely the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage ratified on 4th July 1975 and the Convention on Wetlands of International importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention). Ghana also partakes in the Unesco's Man and the Biosphere programme which was approved in 1983. At the continental level, Ghana ratified, in 1968, the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (African Convention) which establishes various categories of protected areas (IUCN 1992). Subsequently, Ghana has embarked on a number of projects aimed at establishing protected areas in fulfillment of its obligations to these conventions. Presently, there are about 18 protected areas in Ghana. These include parks, forest reserves and wetlands.

One of the deficiencies of the conservation policy in Ghana is that it makes no provision for local people who inhabit areas around protected areas. There is no provision made for indigenous people who live in park areas. Though at the international level, the IUCN talks about Conservation with development which seeks to integrate local people in the running of protected areas, the national policy framework fails to capture this international policy.

Another shortfall of the conservation policy in Ghana is that it is too narrow because it fails to address a number of problem areas. Some of these problem areas include the disbursement of funds from protected areas, the management of protected areas and how to distribute benefits from the park. Thus, the policy just captures the establishment of protected areas within the framework of the national development plan. This may be understood in the sense that at the time, there was relatively less pressure on the government due to low population and better economic condition during the post independence period which made the distribution of benefits from conservation projects less important. The Policy is obsolete and does not take into account current realities in protected management.

2.4 The Kakum National Park

The Kakum National Park is located in the central region of Ghana. More specifically it is in the Twifo –Hemang district which is some few minutes drive from the Cape Coast township, the regional capital. Generally, the central region is known not only for its forest but also for its vibrant festivals, historic forts and castles, bustling markets and colourful fishing villages.

The history of Kakum National Park dates back to 1925 when it was known as the Kakum Conservation Area. It was created as a watershed reserve by the colonial administration which had its headquarters in Cape Coast. The main reason for the creation of the watershed reserve was to ensure that the colonial administration had a constant source of water supply from the river Kakum. It therefore became important to preserve the headwaters. Until 1989 when it became necessary to turn it into an eco-tourist site because of the emerging ideas of eco-tourism, it existed as a forest reserve and it was under the supervision of the Department of Game and Wildlife, now the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission. The move to convert this forest reserve was initiated by the Late Ato Auston in the late 80s when he decided to alleviate poverty in the central region through the development of historical, cultural and natural resources for tourist attraction. Kakum was recommended because its ecosystem was still intact. There were also many animal species that needed to be protected from excessive hunting. Following a gazette in 1991 and the formation of the park in 1992, the government officially opened the park in 1994.

The mode of acquisition of the land is shrouded in obfuscation since it is not documented. However, the most probable mode of acquisition could be based on the London Convention of 1900 which provides for the need for setting aside land for protection by proclamation. Conservation International (CI) and the United States Agency for International Development worked in partnership with the Wildlife Division to develop the park. The creation of the park was herald by difficulties in reaching agreement with local people. Game commandos were brought in to establish the park. People hunted freely before the creation of the park. However, with the conversion of the

forest to a national park, all activities that were not in consonance with the objectives of the national park were halted.

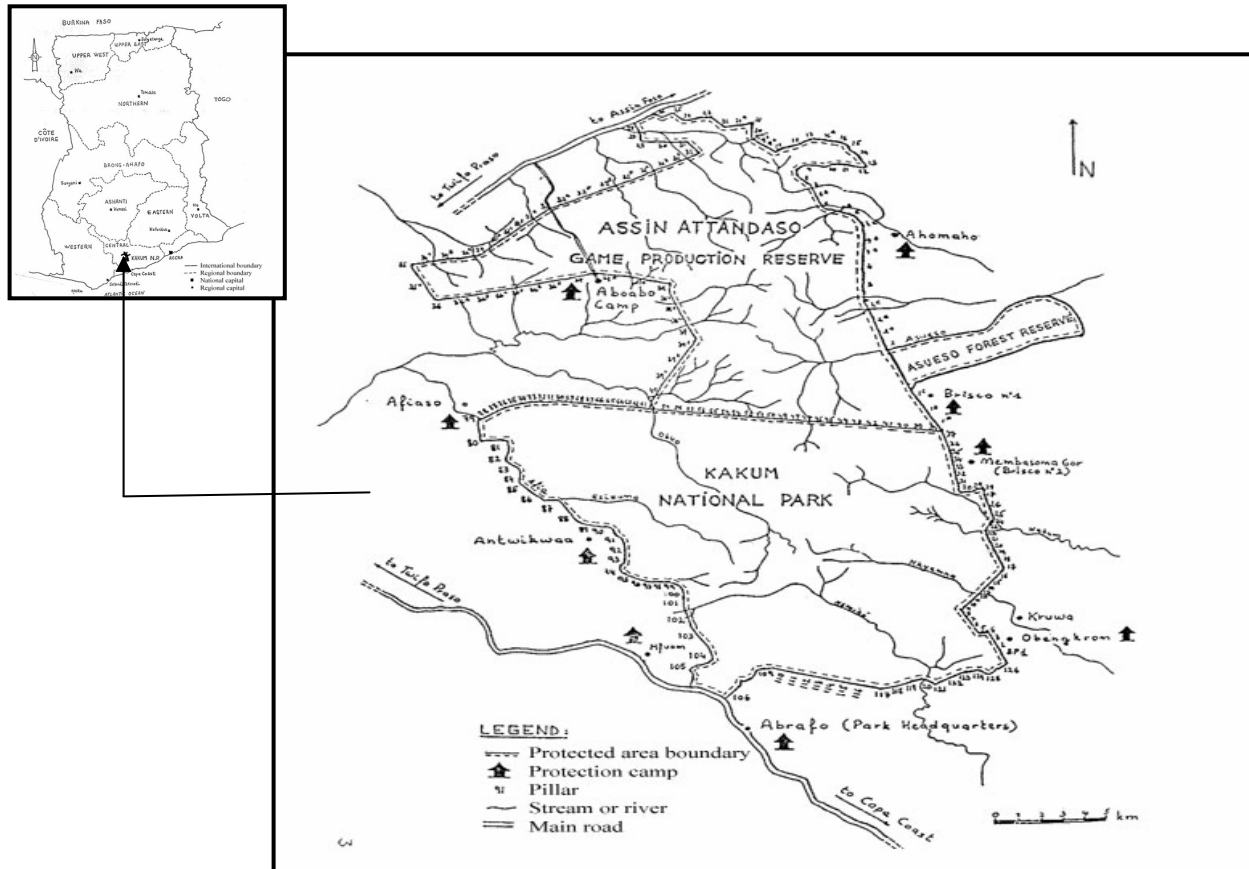


Fig. 4 The map shows the location of the Kakum national park and other villages surrounding it

Kakum national park covers an area of about 350 km of the moist evergreen forest zone¹⁴. The emergent trees are exceptionally high with some reaching 65 meters. The reserve has a varied wildlife with some 40 species of larger mammals, including elephants, bongo, red river hog, seven primates and four species of squirrels. Bird life is also varied. About 200 species are known to occur in the reserve and include 5 hornbill species, frazer-eagle owl, African grey and Senegal parrots. Over 400 species butterflies have also been recorded. The Kakum National Park is about the most developed and subscribed eco-tourism site among the wildlife conservation areas in Ghana.

¹⁴ Refer to fig 3. It is referred to as the semi-deciduous forest.

United States Agency for International Development, Ghana and Conservation International (CI) provide institutional support to the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust to ensure the sustainable management of the Kakum National Park. The Trust Secretariat receives planning and financial management assistance to strengthen its capacity to manage the endowment fund. Kakum was one of a number of environment projects that received over \$2,000,000 in 2002. Tourism, both domestic and foreign, has increased significantly in Ghana in recent years, and the Kakum national park is a major destination.

2.4.1 Other Features of the Park

The Kakum Canopy Walkway, Africa's first and only rainforest walkway, is composed of 350 meters of suspended bridge and six tree platforms that reach the height of 300 meters above the forest floor. From the treetops, visitors experience a unique and spectacular view of the rainforest ecosystem and have the opportunity to see flora and fauna, which could never be viewed from the ground. Hundreds of species of butterflies and birds can be viewed from the Walkway early in the morning.

The Kakum National Park has a visitors' centre, which is managed by Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust (GHCT). This centre was built with funding from USAID and technical support by Conservation International (CI). It is located on a 512-acre site adjacent to the Kakum National Park. This centre provides education to visitors as well as creates environmental awareness among tourists. The park also has a café where they sell food to tourists; this café also serves as a place of relaxation for tourists.

There is a place where exhibits which interpret the complexities which underlie tropical rainforest diversity are displayed. The interdependence among species and the numerous biological connections which make the rain forest a web of life are also displayed. It also highlights the cultural connections that the people of southern Ghana have with the natural world that makes them part of this web.

2.4.2 Fees and Charges at the Park.

The Kakum national park falls under category 'A' Parks of the Wildlife Division. The general gate fee for entrance is 2000 cedis (£0.18). To walk on the canopy walkway which is perhaps the reason why most people visit the place costs 25,000 cedis (\$3), 15,000 cedis (\$1.6) and 10,000 cedis (\$1.2) for Ghanaian adults, students and pupils respectively. For non-nationals, the fees are 90,000 Cedis (10 USD), 50,000 Cedis (6 USD) and 30,000 Cedis (4 USD) for adults, students and pupils respectively. Other activities which attract charges include hiking, camping, farm tours, equipment hiring *et cetera*. These charges range from between 1 and 9 United States Dollars. Local researchers wishing to undertake research in the park pay nothing. However, foreign researchers (both institutions and individuals) pay between 100 and 1000 USD depending on the length of the research period.

2.5 Abrafo and Mfuom

Mfuom and Abrafo are two important towns which are located on the boundary of the Kakum national park. The park is situated between the two towns which makes the towns see the park as belonging to them. Mfuom is a small town with a population of about 2000 people and Abrafo which is relatively bigger has a population of about 4000 people. Most of the people in these villages consist of the elderly and children. Like many other places in the country, most of the youth have migrated to the city in search of better fortunes.

The few young people who still are in the village participate in small scale farming activities and can often be seen in the town entertaining themselves with various games (Draughts and Table tennis). The elderly on the other hand often go to their farms and on return sit together to deliberate on the affairs of the village. One of their major concerns is the fact that their youth have nothing to do in the village and are increasingly becoming a burden on society.

2.5.1 Economic Activities

The main economic activity of Mfuom and Abrafo is farming. Most of the farmers farm for subsistence. The remaining food product is sent for sale to meet other subsistence

needs like meat and fish. This group of farmers constitutes the majority. There is also another group of farmers which can be identified as the cocoa farmers. This group of farmers can be described as the rich by the village standards. Their products are normally purchased by the produce buying company hence marketing them is not much of a problem.

It is important to note that there is also small scale commercial activity in the area. This activity is small in the sense that few people participate and not many of the people are able to buy many things from the market. There are drinking bars where alcoholic beverages are sold. The picture below shows a vibrant market in Mfuom.



Fig. 5 The picture shows what is considered a vibrant market session in Mfuom (Photo: Stephen Babson).

The picture shows local women and children buying and selling at the Mfuom market. These women are wearing cloths which are made of nylon which are cheap and quite affordable. They are normally brought from Togo, a neighbouring country to the east of Ghana and sold at the Jukwa market. In the background are village buildings which are made of mud and roofing sheets. The children in the picture were also suppose to be in school at the time of my visit but their parents could not afford to pay their fees. In fact, the picture portrays the level of poverty in the area and gives a sense of the level of development. This market is where the local people buy important food items. Most of

the locals normally go to the big town, Jukwa, on market days where they market their farm produce. They also buy cloths (second hand), and other basic needs.

There are a few stalls (not more than five) which sell other consumables such as cigarette and provisions. These are the biggest commercial activities of the town apart from other farmers who process palm nuts to make palm oil for sale in Jukwa. People come from the big cities like Cape Coast, Kumasi and Accra to buy them for retail. Some local women process elephant excreta for medicinal purposes which would receive a more detailed attention in chapter five.

2.5.2 Socio-cultural Characteristics of the areas

Traditionally, both Mfuom and Abrafo are under the authority of the Paramount Chief¹⁵ of Lower Denkyira who is resident in Jukwa. Jukwa is also the district capital of the area. The chief of Mfuom pays homage to the paramount chief. Abrafo however has no chief because the selection of a chief has been contentious among the clans in the village. Abrafo is headed by the village elders and opinion leaders. The traditional role of a chief or the elders as the case may be is explicit as far as local customs and conventions are concerned. The role of the chief can be summarized as follows;

- The chief performs religious functions by acting as a link between the living and the dead. During festive occasions, he pours libation to the gods and ancestors on behalf of local people.
- He is the custodian of the land and holds it in trust for the people. The land and the resources belong to ‘the past, the present and the future’¹⁶ hence it is important that the chief, as the custodian, manages these resources with care.
- The Chief is the political head of the community or village. Traditionally, he is the ‘commander-in-chief’ of the village and engages in diplomacy and other forms of negotiation in the local polity. However, he is also the embodiment of unity and must therefore be non-partisan.

¹⁵ A Chief is considered the traditional head of a clan or clans in an area which normally consists of a community or communities. A Paramount Chief is the head of a group of chiefs in a geographical area.

¹⁶ ‘[T]he past, the present and the future’ in the local context means that the land belongs to three categories of people; the dead, the living and those yet to be born.

- Other responsibilities of the chief include the performance of judicial and administrative functions.

An important part of the local tradition is the Aday and Odwira festivals. These festival are celebrated according to the traditional calendar. Aday is celebrated after every forty days starting immediately after the harvest season. Odwira which is the big Aday takes place at the end of the Akan calendar. It is during these festivals that the chief performs some of the functions described above.

Mfuom and Abrafo are characteristically deprived communities although there are some differences between these two communities in terms of access to basic amenities like health care and postal services. There is also a marginal difference in terms of population. There is a school which has poor staffing. The school buildings are quite dilapidated. There are no entertainment facilities in both communities and other social amenities are virtually non-existent.

2.6 The Park and Local People

Since the creation of the park, local people have been affected in diverse ways. Though there have not been a movement of a significant number of people from the park area, some have had to move because their place of residence is within the encatchment area. Others have also had to move because they have been ‘evicted’ by the elephants. As the local put it, ‘nothing can stop the elephant on its way’. One major problem around the protected area is that the area between the forest boundary and the residence of local people is constantly been extended. There are also those who have migrated because their livelihood sources have been cut. It was not possible to get the figures or statistics on the trend because the prevailing issue has received little attention among the NGO community and policymakers.

The creation of the Kakum national does not allow local people to go into the national forest. Presently, it is considered a criminal offence to be seen in the park holding anything taken from the forest. What this means is that local people are unable to go into the park for basic needs such as medicines *et cetera*. The performance of rituals during

festive occasions have also ceased with the creation of the park. It is considered illegal to be seen in the park without permission from the park authorities.

One major problem faced by local resident is elephant raid. During the rainy season, when the elephants often go out, most of the villagers have their farms destroyed. The elephants come as far as to the homes of people to destroy houses, defecate around the whole area and eat some of the crops of local farmers. This, according to the locals, is one of the conflicting issues which they are yet to resolve with the park authorities.

Chapter 3

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 An Overview

The main theoretical argument in respect of this thesis is that Conservation within the framework of the World Commission on Environment and Development Report (1987) advocating for the sustainable management of forest resources often leads to social and cultural conflict between the managers of conservation areas and local people who inhabit most of these conservation areas. This conflict emanates from different sources. Anderson and Grove (1987) argue that these conflicts arise because conservation programs often ignore the cultural and social matrix within which they are established. Numerous examples of such conflicts in conservation areas have been documented and they include; the conflict between the Bushmen and Conservationist in south-western Namibia, among the Bisnois of India and the Ewes of Ghana (Kemf 1993). The ensuing section looks at the paradigm that has underlain the conservation ideology.

3.2 Sustainability and the Conservationist Paradigm

A key component of sustainable development is the conservation of forest and wildlife resources. In this vein, United Nations through its agencies and other national and international non-governmental organisations have embarked on a series of conservation programmes. One of such programmes is demarcating 'areas', both forest and wildlife, as 'protected'. This is under the supervision of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The WCED (1987) in its report observes that the world is an 'ecological crisis'. It attributes the major cause of this crisis to poverty in developing countries. It further notes that over the past few decades, life-threatening environmental concerns have surfaced in the developing world. In parts of Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, environmental concerns are becoming a source of political unrest and political tension. In order to ameliorate this condition of global ecological crisis, the commission proposes

conservation or preservation of ecosystems through the establishment and enlargement of protected areas.

Conservation is a much used term but its meaning ranges through a variety of contexts. In the African context, the view that has commonly identified conservation with the protection of species and habitats, with movement to preserve wildlife and wilderness is giving way to a broader discussion linking conservation to the process of rural development and the survival of agrarian societies (Anderson & Grove 1987).

Anderson & Grove (1987) note that many of the conservation programmes in Africa whose views are given currency in the apparent environmental crisis of the 1980s pay mere lip service to the social context within which they propose to operate their management systems. The approach by the IUCN to ensure participation of local people in conservation programme has underlying assumptions that according to Anderson and Grove are disturbing-the assumption that the conservationist vision of society must predominate.

Empirical studies continue to show that the transfer of 'western' conservation approaches to developing countries has had adverse effects on food security and livelihood of people living in and around protected areas. National parks established on indigenous lands have denied local rights to resources, turning local people practically overnight from hunters and cultivators to 'poachers' and 'squatters'. Only in rare cases are local people involved in the designation and creation of protected areas (Pimbert & Ghimire 1997).

Another dimension of the establishment of protected areas that is rooted in the conservationist paradigm is the relocation of indigenous people. The relocation of indigenous populations comes along with social, political and environmental consequences that are yet to be understood by policy makers. A World Bank study has noted that the relocation of indigenous peoples causes 'multi-dimensional stress' (cited in Pimbert & Ghimire 1997). These include "'grieving-for-a-lost-home syndrome', 'anxiety for the future' and 'feeling of impotence associated with the inability to protect one's home and community from disruption'" (ibid:105). Even though some of these stresses are reversible, the ones associated with socio-cultural stress may be irreversible.

The WCED (1987) notes that in the pursuit of sustainable development- development that provides for the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs - tribal and indigenous people will need special attention as forces of economic development disrupt their traditional life styles, the effect of conservation policies all over the world reveals otherwise. Contrary to what the commission suggests, conservation policy which is a fallout of sustainable development has disrupted many indigenous lives and livelihoods. This brings the idea of sustainability into question; how do we measure sustainability? And for whom are we measuring sustainability?

Probably, one of the fiercest critics of the conservationist agenda is Guha , who in his critique of the ‘deep ecology’¹⁷ and the anthropocentric/biocentric distinctions notes that this distinction is of little use in understanding the dynamics of environmental degradation in third world countries and the deprivation thereof. He argues that the ecological problems facing the world today and which the WCED has echoed has two fundamental causes which are (a) over consumption by the industrialized world and the urban class in developing countries and (b)growing militarization both in the short and long term. These two problems according to him have no connection with the biocentric/anthropocentric distinction. Guha observes that the wholesale transfer of a movement culturally rooted in American conservation, results in social (and cultural) uprooting of human populations in other parts of the globe (Guha 2002).

One of the shortfalls of conservation policy has been the lack of consideration of the human factor. The existence of a population in a place presupposes a complex ethnic, social and biological influences and interactions. But human needs assessment are seldom incorporated in the planning of conservation programmes based on the assumption that developing countries will copy the development style of western countries so conservation ideas must be transplanted without modification (McNeely & Miller 1984).

¹⁷The term ‘Deep Ecology’ was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss. It can be defined as the philosophical view that the environment and its constituent parts including man is one big interdependent whole therefore each part must be assigned equal value. Some of its tenets include; a shift from an anthropocentric to a biocentric perspective, focus on preservation of unspoiled nature and the belief that deep ecologists no matter their internal difference are the ‘leading edge’ of the environmental movement.(Guha 2002)

Ignoring these human needs in the planning of conservation programmes is itself against the principles of sustainable development. It is an issue of compromising the needs of the present to meet future needs which is contrary to the definition of the WCED. At the level of reason, how do you serve the interest of future generation when the needs of the present have not been met?

3.3 Politics of Conservation

Colchester (1997) has observed that the very politics of conservation which begins with the acquisition of land often leads to conflicts in the long-run. He argues that conservationists, to gain legitimacy often seek alliances with governments who they see as target groups. Subsequently, most protected areas are appropriated by the state thereby annulling, limiting or restricting local rights of use and tenure. This makes collaboration between local people and conservationist difficult. In furtherance of this argument, Colchester argues that 'land rights are not just dry legal concepts: they express the deep connections between peoples and their environments. They establish the framework that regulates community use of the environment, and they are vested in political institutions that provide the alternative to direct state management of resources'. The denial of indigenous peoples' rights is thus not just contrary to both customary and international law, it tears at the fabric of indigenous society and its relations with the environment. Traditional balances between humans and their environment are disrupted and local land management and access to resource use suffer (*ibid*). Where local people are forcefully moved from their land the consequences have been grave but in many cases, conservation has limited the extent of subsistence (Chatty & Colchester 2002) which eventually forces local people out. In cases where people are forced to resettle elsewhere the results have been devastating. Colchester and Chatty (2002) quote the World Bank as noting that;

[W]hen people are forcefully moved, production systems may be dismantled, long-established residential settlements are disorganized, and kinship groups are scattered and disorganized...informal social networks that are part of daily sustenance systems...collapse because of territorial dispersions. Symbolic markers, such as ancestral shrines and graves are abandoned, breaking links

with the past and with people's cultural identity (World Bank iii-iv cited in Chatty & Colchester 2002:2).

In a similar vein, Theodossopoulos (2002) has observed that conservation narrowly focuses on the economic utility of disputed land whiles totally ignoring the cultural matrix. What these scholars including even the World Bank acknowledge is that conservation in most cases has had serious consequences on local people. It is in this context that the need to examine how land acquisition for the creation of the Kakum national park has affected local people and limited subsistence needs is to be understood. How have local routines such as festivals and other cultural practices been affected due to the creation of the national park? The point of departure is that the hard-line approach to conservation such as the one adopted at Kakum in the long-run will not yield sustainable dividends.

3.4 Environmental Perception in Policy Decision –making

The required attention has not been given to the concept of perception in the environmental literature even though the concept is vital at all levels of environmental policy decision-making. The difference between perception and reality can make or unmake an environmental policy effective. It is therefore important to incorporate the concept of perception in environmental policy decision making. For instance, whether the view that Africa's ecology is on the brink of collapse is just a perception or reality is important in determining which policy direction to pursue.

Altman and Chemers (1993) are among the few scholars who have endeavored to attempt a definition of perception from an environmental perspective. In their book entitled *Culture and Environment*, they define environmental perception as a 'process composed of a set of series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attribution of phenomena in his everyday spatial environment (*ibid*:44)'. Downs and Stea (cited in Chemers and Altman 1993) have observed that environmental perceptions of the physical environment are often distorted, misrepresented or schematized. They also are augmented and often contain excess information.

Environmental perceptions are psychological¹⁸ in that we interpret the environment and we are selective and incomplete in our portrayal of it. The information received from the environment from our senses are processed and organized in ways that are meaningful to us and to our lives, and the results are carried out and represented in our minds. What is meaningful, consistent, and appropriate is influenced by our cultural experiences (*ibid*).

As mentioned earlier, the difference between perception and reality is given little attention in the environmental debate unlike in other disciplines like political science, where perception plays an important role especially in international relations in general and foreign policy in particular. In his book *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* Jervis (1976) asks the question; “do the decision-makers’ perception matter?” Though this question may be related to international relations, it also makes sense when applied to conservation. I therefore ask: does the perception of decision-makers’ matter in environmental policy decision making? Before answering this question, it is important to take a look at the general perception that has influenced environmental policy in Africa recently.

Leach and Mearns (1996) have observed that environmental policy in Africa is driven by a set of powerful, perceived images of environmental change. These include, desertification of dry lands, widespread existence of wood fuel crisis, deforestation, soil erosion *et cetera* and all these are attributed to rapid population growth. These perceived images have gained the status of received wisdom and have been integrated in the lexicon of the development dictionary. Such views of environmental change in Africa are not restricted to professional circles. This is also popularized in the media in developed and developing countries. Images of starving children and the attribution of the blame to natural environmental causes have become an integral part of the lie of the land. These orthodoxies assign to Africa’s farmers, hunters, and herders a particular role as agents as well as victims of environmental change. If current trends are not reversed, it is implied, local land-use practices will have to be transformed and made less destructive; yet the policies and programmes that result commonly prove to be at best neutral and at worst deleterious in their consequences for rural people and for the natural resource based on

¹⁸ Psychological in the sense that it is based on our perception of it and the use to which we put environmental resources depend on the way we see it.

which their livelihood depend (Carruthers 1997). These are perceptions that only few scholars have dared to question.

The general perception in the environmental circles is that Africa is in an ecological crisis. This crisis is attributed to poverty, high population growth and environmental degradation (Anderson & Groove 1997, WCED 1987). Poverty is perceived or believed to be the cause of environmental degradation. Poor people, so the argument goes, are forced to overuse environmental resources to survive from day to day and their impoverishment of their environment further impoverishes them, making their survival ever more difficult and uncertain (WCED 1987). High population growth is said to increase scarcity of natural resources in Africa and other less developed countries. There is also a per capita decrease in services such as health and education. All these perpetuate the poverty situation in Africa. These perceptual images have been a driving force behind conservation policies in Africa. However, these perceptions have been seriously challenged by some writers (see Fairhead & Leach 1997, Bell 1987).

Bell (1987) asks whether this perception of Africa on the brink of an ecological collapse is realistic. To begin with, he argues, if even there is evidence of high population growth in Africa, they do not mean that Africa's population is encountering serious constraints such as shortage of land, food and other resources. Furthermore, he argues that if Africa's population is still under the carrying capacity, it probably would mean that during the colonial era when European had contact with Africa, the population of Africa probably formed a small portion of the carrying capacity.

The perception that environmental degradation caused by deforestation due to human intervention is also refuted in Anderson & Grove (1997) and Leach & Fairhead (1998). Anderson and Grove for instance argue that most of the deforested areas of West Africa are caused by drought rather than human intervention. In the same vein, Fairhead and Leach (1998) have argued that, statistics have exaggerated the extent of deforestation in the West African sub-region. On the basis of their research they argue that what is supposed to be deforested areas are areas that have been inhabited by local people and these local people through their local knowledge have rather enhanced the vegetation of these areas. Similarly, famine has also been identified as not a new phenomenon in

Africa. Drawing on the case of Ethiopia, Anderson and Grove note, by quoting Hancock (1995) that famine has always occurred in these regions between 1540 and 1900. Nevertheless, these were not the result of human interventions rather famine has often been caused by natural processes such as drought.

Apart from these distorted stereotypes of ecological crises which have been a driving force behind environmental policies in Africa the perception that indigenous people have through irresponsible environmental practices contributed to causing environmental degradation also prevails. Some of the arguments presented to show that local people are responsible for environmental degradation are subtly related to poverty. For example, to say that the environmental problems of concern to vulnerable groups in marginal areas are generally quite localized in nature, revolving around immediate issues, such as the degradation of a particular rangeland or soil erosion of farmland or the progressive shortening of fallow by inference identifies environmental degradation with local people. It may be interesting to note that to some extent, to say that some local people have been responsible for causing environmental degradation may be true since in some parts of Ghana, some indigenous people through indigenous practices such as bush burning as a method of farming, have caused bushfires which have had negative effects on the environment in general and wildlife in particular especially in the savanna areas (Gyabaah 1996).

In his article titled "Culture and the Perception on the Environment", Ingold (1992) arguing against the popular notion of the cultural construction of the environment, presents an interesting exposition on human perception of the environment. According to him, the cultural construction of the environment as argued by ecological anthropologist can not be accepted since culture is a product of our interaction with the environment which we act upon based on our perception of it. Persons and their environment are mutually constitutive components of the same world. A person's development is also the development of the person's environment. This complementary process results from a continuous interchange across the emergent boundary between them (cited in Ingold 1990).

Using Gibson's theory of direct perception and von Uexkull's theory of meaning Ingold (1992) postulates that perception (by which he meant direct perception as used by Gibson) of the environment is a mode of engagement with the world not a mode of construction of it. Meaning, 'perception is not a matter of the mental processing of sensory inputs into products but involves the functioning of a total system...within an environmental context'. Through perception, one is able to come to realize the properties of his environment and acts on it accordingly.

For Ingold, perception and action are not separable because 'perception is intimately involved in action. Through both, the environment enters actively into the constitution of persons. Perception is also influenced by the affordances that the environment offers to people. People's relationship to their environment is largely dependent on how they perceive it to be. One can agree with Ingold when he argues that enfolded in persons are the histories of their environmental relations and enfolded in the environment are the histories of activities of humans. To sever the links between people and their environment therefore is to cut them off from the history of their past which has made them who they are.

However, Ingold's argument that language is not used for generating internal perceptions of our environment or our surrounding nor is it necessary for perception to be shared is disturbing. It constitutes an underestimation of language in the social relations of individuals and groups. Language can be a medium of transferring information from one person to another. This way a person can influence another through the medium of communication by transferring his/her perception of the environment to that person. Ignoring this function of language as a means by which ideas and perceptions are shared needs to be reconsidered.

Ingold's thesis also sharply contrasts with that of Holy and Stuchlik (1983) who have argued that what people believe does not necessarily reflect what they do. There need to be a series of motivational factors that would be brought to bear on beliefs in order to act in a certain way. Thus, if norms are drawn from perception, as is often the case, we need to account for the reason why people would behave in respect of the norms.

Given this understanding of perception it is important to subject our views on the environment to serious scrutiny to ascertain whether they are mere perceptions or they are real or actual. This would not only make policy formulation effective but also ensure that they are rigorous. The debate on the apparent state of the global ecology is still being debated. While some consider the crisis as perceived and statistics emanating from this perception as exaggerated, others consider the crisis as imminent and real. Whatever is the case, it is still important that we do not dwell on perception as the basis of policy formulation.

Be that as it may, studies have shown that most local people have a set of powerful beliefs that have influenced their attitudes toward the environment. Although studies have shown little correlation between beliefs prescribing certain actions, most indigenous people through their beliefs and practices have preserved ecosystems as already mentioned above. The Cree Indians once again are a good example of indigenous people who through respect for animals for example have ensured the sustainable management of their resources. The Crees learn for example that in hunting it is the animal which offers itself to the hunter out of respect which the hunter accords the animal. The hunter does not get his or her game through his or her skill.

Most books (Kemf 1993, Berkes1999, Chatty & Colchester 2001) have tried to give accounts of indigenous people who have managed to their resources in sustainable ways but many of them overlook the time dimension in their discussions. What is the role of traditional beliefs in conserving the environment in modern times especially when most of these beliefs systems have come under strong influence from a number of factors such as westernisation, christianity, science and technology and the like. The impact of these factors continues to spread at an alarming rate. Probably those societies which are believed to have managed their resources well through their belief systems are yet to come under influence of these factors. Against this background, it is important to examine the basis of local beliefs and the ability of these beliefs to withstand the forces of modernization and globalization. This is not undermining local belief systems but many of them have been grounded in superstition which is eroded with time.

Increasingly, the perception among the conservationist community in relation to traditional indigenous knowledge is changing. If we cannot trust beliefs of local people to preserve ecosystems with the passage of time, can we trust conservation which has also proven to impact on local people negatively. If we reject both systems as measures to ensure environmental sustainability what other alternative(s) exist? How do we ensure that the current conservation problems such as conflicts are resolved?

3.5 Local People and Protected Area Management

As the perception of the potency of traditional indigenous knowledge increases as described in the previous section, there has also been the recognition of the need for participation of indigenous people in the management of protected areas. This recognition given to local people has been assigned different terminologies. Some of these terminologies include 'Community Involvement', 'Joint Management', 'Collaborative Management' and 'Community Participation'. In this study, I would use community participation but sometimes reference would be made to other terminologies. Attention has been drawn to the fact that there is the need to balance conservation objectives with the development needs of the people living in and around protected areas. At the same time there has also been an increasing emphasis on the need to involve local people in the management of natural resources but what is Participation?

Participation implies different things to different people in terms of the processes, purpose and profitability (Arnesen 2002). Consequently, the term has been given various definitions in development circles. In the Agenda 21 document, Participation is defined as "improving or restructuring the decision making process so that consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues are fully integrated and a broad range of public participation ensured" (cited in Arnesen 2000:20). The World Bank also defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank 1995 cited in Arnesen 2000:20). What seems to be the most crucial element from the definitions is that the input of people who will be affected by a particular policy is important if the ultimate viability and efficiency of the policy is to be ensured.

Participation can be categorized into seven main types depending on the form it takes. These are as follows; Passive participation which involves sharing information, participation in information giving involving consultations, participation by consultation which is based on joint assessment, participation for material incentives which involves shared decision-making, functional participation which is based on collaborative mechanisms, interactive participation which is based on empowerment mechanisms and self-mobilisation which is initiated by local people (Arnesen 2000). One important question to ask at this stage is why participation?

Arguments for the need for participation of local people in the management of natural resources in general and protected areas in particular have come from diverse fronts. Firstly, it has been argued that local communities have greater interest and greater accountability in the sustainable management of resources over time than does the state or other distant stakeholders (Chatty & Colchester 2002). This is because when local people who live around protected areas are involved from the planning stage through to the implementation stage, they tend to see the project as owned by them and therefore there is increased local support for the project.

Secondly, it has been argued that local people who are long-term residents of the area have in their possession an invaluable worth of knowledge about local ecological processes. This enables them to efficiently regulate access to and use of resources

Local people are better able to manage natural resources through local management strategies and traditional forms of tenure. When local people manage their resources through local institution and traditional forms of tenure there is the tendency for the project to shore up legitimacy that in the long-run ensures the long-term viability of the project.

Finally it has been argued that for protected areas to be sustainable in the long run it must involve the local people. Orr (2000) notes that sustainability of protected areas requires that project beneficiaries own the development process in which they play a part and ownership will not occur unless they play an active role in determining their needs and planning for their needs to be met and participate in strategies for those needs to be met.

While there seems to be a growing support to the participation of local people in the management of protected areas, there are others like Eghenter (2002) who argues that there seem to be an unproven assumption about local people and the management of forest areas. She argues that the supposed privileged relationship of local people with nature; the static view of local people's future as an unconditional projection of their past; and the belief that local institutions are endowed with a natural capacity to manage a protected area in the interest in biodiversity conservation must be reviewed. She cautions that these assumptions can ultimately undermine the efforts to effectively protect the rights of local communities and preserve biodiversity in conservation areas.

3.6 Introducing the Concept of Environmental Security

The idea of environmental conservation can also be linked to the concept of environment security even though as a concept, environmental security is still being debated. To come to a complete understanding of the meaning of environmental security it is important to understand what the term security means.

The term 'security' was mostly used by the academic discipline of International Relations until the need to consider its meaning came to the attention of scholars. Theorists in this discipline have always defined the term in a narrow sense as involving state security that is almost synonymous with military power. In this regard, it was perceived that the more military power, the more security. This traditional approach to security known as realism focuses on the causes of war and the conditions for peace between and among states. Realists define security as protection of a state from other self-regarding states. Critics of the realist approach to security proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s. This led to diverse perspective on security thereby creating different schools such as the liberal institutionalists, structuralists and neo-realists. Neo-realists for instance acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of threat to a state.

Scholars outside the discipline of international relations have also tried to broaden the scope of the concept of security. According to these scholars, for security to be meaningful, it would have to amount to positive stable peace structure. In this sense, security is not just the absence of war but the elimination of structural violence (Møller 2000). Though recent scholars from the discipline of International relations have

attempted to broaden the definition of the term, not all subscribe to this idea. Some have argued that to expand the concept too far would not be practical since it would create the need for an additional term for the 'traditional security' (*ibid*).

Furthermore, it has been argued that to maintain the concept as an analytical tool, the narrow notion must be maintained (Lopez 2001). In the narrow sense, "the traditional international relations approach to 'security' during the era of almost unchallenged dominance of realism was focused on the state as the referent object of security" (Møller 2000:3). Thus the traditional conception of the state was linked to the notion of 'national' security i.e. territorially rather than nation-state. The assumption underlying this notion of security was that the international system was anarchic with each state pursuing its own interest defined in terms of power. The only way to guard against this was to ensure a balance of power that would enable one state to contain the other in case of war which was inevitable when national interests collided.

In recognition of the fact that threats faced by states today are not only from outside the state (i.e. threats posed by other state) but also from within the state, there has been the need to broaden the notion of security to encompass other aspects of security (Lopez 2001). As stated by Thompson (1997:3), "it is not the enemy at the gate, but the enemy within, that is the present and future danger". The preservation of international security requires that we shift emphasis away from the conventional military forces and towards the sorts of efforts that will enhance our environmental security. In this regard, Møller (2000) identifies other aspects of security to include the following; the political dimension; the economic dimension; the societal dimension; and the environmental dimension. Since the issue of concern here is environmental security, I will discuss it further.

The expansion of the term security, it is argued, would broaden its scope too wide and hence increase the number of actors. One of the main arguments for the expansion of the scope of the term is to safeguard common interest. To increase the actors by widening the scope of the term means that consensus building would be a luxury no one can afford. Cooperation becomes difficult. On the other hand the smaller the actors (given that the traditional concept is maintained) the more effective it is to build cooperation in order to

pursue the common interest of nations (Bröms 1995).

Another argument against the attempt to link the concept of security to environmental problems is that global environmental degradation and resource scarcity hardly leads to interstate war. However this argument has been rebutted on the ground that environmental problems are not necessarily those that are global in scale. Environmental problems also include local issues.

3.6.1 Environmental Security Debates

It is difficult to find a comprehensive definition of environmental security since most writers on environmental security try to establish a link between the environment and security. What other writers have done is to explain the components of environmental security. Proponents of environmental security argue that the environment is a potential source of social conflicts, and if society faces dangers of environmental change, then security policies and the concept of security itself must be redefined to take into account these threats. Environmental security can be understood in three senses as explained by Møller (2000) or four senses as explained by Dokken & Græger (1995);

- Firstly, environmental security argues that environmental problems have the potential of causing war or preparing the grounds for war;
- Secondly, environmental security argues that environmental problems can be caused by war or preparations for war. Thus, war has the potential of destroying the environment. For example, the threat posed by nuclear war and;
- Thirdly, environmental security argues that environmental problems can constitute a direct security threat to a state. For example the rising sea levels can be a direct security threat to countries like Bangladesh which lies in a low lying region and China.

In addition to the above, Dokken and Græger (1995) add that environmental degradation and environmental disasters and lack of respect for environmentally attuned resources management may lead to disputes between countries. That is, environmental degradation

as well as environmental scarcity is a potential cause of insecurity to the state. The linkage between the environment and security was also high-lighted by the WCED (1987) in its report when it noted that the deepening and widening of environmental crisis presents a threat to national security survival that may be greater than well-armed, ill-disposed neighbors and unfriendly alliances. Further, it adds that;

[E]nvironmental stress is seldom the only cause of major conflicts within and among nations. Nevertheless, they can arise from marginalization of sectors of the population and from ensuing violence. This occurs when the political processes are unable to handle the effect of environmental stress resulting. Environmental stress can be an important part of the web of causality associated with any conflict and can in some cases be catalytic. Poverty, injustice, environmental degradation, and conflict interact in complex and potent ways (WCED 1987:291).

What it means is that to avert the dangers of security threats, it is important for nations to pursue sustainable development. Nations must cooperate in different ways to solve environmental problems since at the level of nuclear warfare which is the extreme countries can go, there is the threat of mutual annihilation. The WCED sites examples from the horn of Africa to demonstrate how environmental problems have contributed to armed social conflicts. In Ethiopia it notes that hunger and starvation were caused by years of over use of soil that leads to severe soil erosion. At the national level the effect of such conflicts caused by environmental degradation is that most people become environmental refugees. By extension, neighbouring countries would have to bare a branch of the problem by accommodating such environmentally displaced people which also contributes to economic problems in the host country. Thus the problems involved here is a fluid one which by extrapolation can destabilize an entire region.

The attempt to establish a link between security and environment has been seriously critiqued by Thompson (1997). In trying to be reflexive about environmental security, he questions the assumptions underlying the concept of environmental security. He notes that there is something wrong with the unreflexive attachment to the assumption that there is a direct link between population increase and environmental degradation. The

notion that environmental degradation is caused by population growth and this can lead to a state of insecurity is misleading. In his view, this assumption overlooks the ingenuity of man. He argues that man throughout history has been able to use his ingenuity to solve varying degrees of problems hence in formulating a theory on environmental security that must be taken into account. He also draws on social solidarity as a way of solving environmental problems.

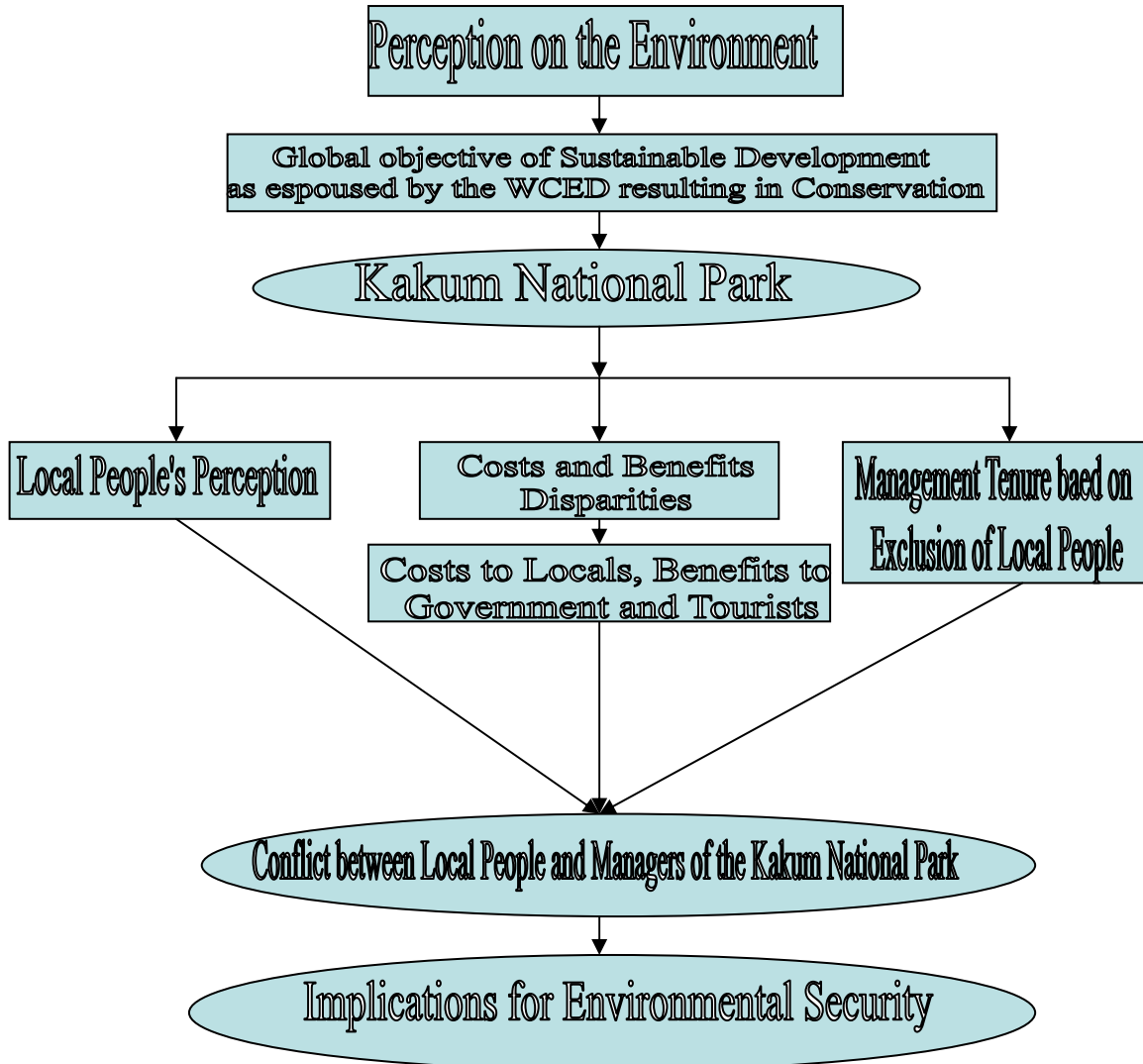
Another problem associated with finding a comprehensive definition for environmental security is the meaning of the term 'environment' in environmental security. Bröms (1995) notes the term environment is difficult to define as well as difficult to delimitate. For the term environmental security to be meaningful, it is important for people to know what actors mean by environment, environmental degradation *et cetera*. The difficulty in finding a comprehensive definition for the concept in part derives from the lack of consensus on the meaning of environment.

It is important to ask; what is the importance of environmental security in the context of the study of the conflict in Kakum? It is not difficult to realize that conservation efforts could be or are indeed a direct result of the need to ensure some form of environmental security. That is not to say that environmental conservation results directly from the need to ensure environmental security. However, in the broader scheme of things, protected areas when it has achieved its goal, is capable of ensuring environmental security. Since by environmental security, the state is not the only referent object here but the individual and society at large, then it is important that the conflict in Kakum is seen in the light of environmental security.

Below is a working model for the theoretical perspective presented above. This model is not to be taken as a causal model. Environmental security which appears at the bottom is not a dependent variable. The model just gives me a pictorial representation of the theory I have presented and the connection they make.

3.7 Model for Analysis

Fig. 6 A working model of the thesis showing the relationship between the various *conceptual* components and the conflicts between protected area managers and local people (Not to be considered as a causal model).



The above working model tries to capture my conceptual frame and the interconnections that would enable me explain the conflict in my research area. The model begins with perception of the environment on the top to show that conservation is based on a perception on the environment- the perception that the environment is in crisis. Policy on the environment is driven by this perception. Global perception on the environment is also largely influenced by the WCED Report of 1987. The policy, influenced by

perception on the environment, has culminated in projects like national parks and other protected areas. The establishment of national parks has led to conflicts in many areas around the world. My hypothesis is that conflict emanates from three main areas. These are perception, costs and benefit sharing and management tenure. The theoretical framework of analysis is therefore chosen in this respect. All the areas of conflicts put together have gross implications for environmental security. The interconnectedness of the conceptual framework as depicted by the model is further explained in the following sections.

To begin with, how do the theoretical perspectives presented above help to explain the conflict in Kakum? Going back to my research question; what are the source of conflicts between managers of the park and the local people and how has this impacted on local people? My hypothesis is that differences in perception, issues regarding management processes and cost and benefit disparities resulting from the inability of the parks official to meet local people's needs has been a source of conflict between local people and managers of the park.

Firstly, the conflict in Kakum can be seen as resulting from the cost and benefit imbalance between local people and protected area managers. The current conservation paradigm as far as Kakum is concerned involves costs and benefits which are not evenly distributed between the two parties. The point at issue is that sustainable development through projects such as conservation has not given attention to the cost and benefit distribution between local people and national parks managers. This has been a source of conflict between the two parties – protected area managers and local people. An empirical analysis of costs and benefits distribution between the managers of Kakum national park and local people would be used to explain that when there are imbalances to the disadvantage of local people, it has implications for the long-term sustainability of national parks in particular and sustainable development in general. Some of the potential costs to local people for instance can be the result of not benefiting from the proceeds from the park or destruction of farms. It is in this context that my empirical data would be analysed.

Secondly, differences in perception can also be a potential source of conflict therefore perception is an important factor in environmental decision-making. In relation to Kakum, differences in environmental perception between local people and the managers present another source of conflict. How one perceives the environment affects how one relates to it. In this sense, how do local people perceive the environment? How different is this perception from that of the managers of the national park? and how does this lead to conflict? An analysis of local people's relationship to the environment and the national park managers' perception would be used to explain that when there are differences in the way of perceiving the environment, this can be a potential source of conflict.

I find Ingold's thesis interesting in understanding the conflict in Kakum. This is because if perception determines action, then how one sees the environment is important in evaluating action. Differences in perception would mean differences in action. By implications therefore, difference in the way people see and act on the environment can lead to conflicts of different forms.

Thirdly, the management tenure of a resource can also bring about conflicts. There are different management regimes depending on what is being managed and how this resource is governed. In natural resource management, it has been observed that often times when local people are excluded from the management of a resource, conflicts occur. To this extent, an analysis of the extent to which local people have participated in the management of the Kakum national park is seen as a source of conflict between the managers of the park and local people. The theoretical arguments presented would then serve as a point of departure. Thus, the exclusion of the local people from the management can account for the hostility that exists between the two parties but in another vain this hostility can serve as a threat to the sustainability of the park as would be discussed in later chapters.

The concept of environmental security becomes even more important in conservation when it is conceived as not constituting warfare but also including threats and vulnerabilities to the individual or a group of individuals. When environmental security is seen as involving conflicts and disagreements, then one can understand that conflicts in environmental conservation or protection fall within the purview of environmental

security. In the context of environmental security, it is important to proceed with conservation in a manner that would not jeopardise the security that forms the basis for conservation. Conservation must have the objective of preventing or at least reducing environmental degradation while at the same time safeguarding the interests of local people. This is important because if local interests are not safeguarded, then we recreate the problems we intended to solve- conflicts which may lead to violence which is a threat to national security.

Another way through which my theoretical perspective would be brought to bear on the empirical data is that the kind of conflict taking place in Kakum has implication for environmental security. Unresolved conflicts arising from the persistent deprivation of local people in the face of high population growth and further environmental degradation is capable of leading to violence in one way or the other. Violence threatens the security of the individual and the community making people vulnerable which Bröms (1995) identifies as aspects of environmental security. Bröms links threats and vulnerabilities of the individual to environmental security even though he is silent on the specifics of these threats. Violence can also lead to further environmental degradation. Severe environmental degradation also has implications for national security. In a broader sense therefore it is important to understand the conflict within the larger context of security.

It thus makes sense to argue that conservation within the framework of sustainable development would be a mirage if such conflicts are not understood and resolved as far as Ghana is concerned. As I would also argue in later chapters, the long-term sustainability of the environment and the realization of development that is sustainable need to consider the *modus operandi* of conservation programmes in general and national parks in particular. The link between conservation and development must not be a mere rhetoric. It needs to reflect in the practical implementation of policy where the developmental needs to the people are given consideration. It is within this framework that my empirical study is situated and must be understood.

Chapter 4

4.0 Perceptions on the Environment

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the perceptions on the environment from two perspectives. First, I look at the perception of the environment from the viewpoint of the locals and from the viewpoint of the elites thereafter. As the discussion will show, differences in the perception of different groups can be a source of conflict. Indeed, this is a source of conflict between the local people of Kakum and the elites who are mostly the various organisations acting in concert to sustain the Kakum national park. The elites¹⁹ include people employed by government and the NGOs working with the park authorities. It was revealing to know the complex nature of perception and the extent to which it presents itself as a source of conflict not only between the locals and the elites but also among the locals. The degree of variation of perception should not be underestimated because perception among the locals is not a uniform idea. It is influenced by one's sociological and cultural worldview that also depends on factors such as one's level of education, acculturation and exposure.

The locals' perception of the environment generally manifests itself in their way of life. The local people do not distinguish between man and environment. Man is part of the environment in that man depends on the environment for everything ranging from physical needs to spiritual fulfillment. This is supportive of Ingold's view that people are inextricably involved in their environment. The complexity of the environment is well understood among the locals. The perception of local people are sometimes expressed through speeches and public acts. Some of these public acts include libation pouring, performance of certain rituals during festive occasions such as the 'Odwira festival' or the 'Aday festival', respect for certain tree species as the abode of some spirits. What this means is that among the local people, the environment is held in high esteem. An attempt to defile the environment always comes with severe repercussions. At the same time, for

¹⁹ Elites in this context refer to managers of the park, workers at the wildlife department and relatively educated people (at least to the tertiary level).

the locals, the environment is seen as a source of their livelihood since they are operating in a 'non-monetary economy'. Thus, the environment is revered for its mystical nature but at the same time it is respected for its providence.

Among the locals they also agree that there has been a loss of environmental values that are based on their perceptions of the environment. Many of the values that helped to preserve the environment in the past have lost their efficacy. The loss of environmental values is attributed to many factors. Some of the local people attribute the problems in the environment to what they call 'civilization'. Civilization as is used by the locals is heavily loaded with meaning. On the one hand it means education and Christianity. On the other hand it refers to technology with its attendant innovations. Citing the chain-saw as an example of what technology can do, they lamented how this small gadget can bring down the entire forest in some few hours.

Quite the contrary, the elites also have their perception of the environment which is grounded in their view of the national parks and what it symbolizes. To many elites, it is a source of inspiration and a place of seeking reunion with nature. It is a place of relaxation on holidays. Some of these elites see themselves as called to preserve the integrity of the environment and they will do whatever it takes to see to it that what has remained of the once thick vegetation is preserved for the benefit of nature lovers. Local people according to the elites are a threat to the forest and therefore must be restricted from the forest.

Protecting the forest therefore becomes a bone of contention. When these two perceptions come together, as will be discussed later, there will be a clash –a conflict. Once there is no consensus between the locals and elites, there are bound to be conflicts.

4.2 The Local's Perception of the Environment

Steve: What is the environment?

1st group of locals: The environment is the land, trees, the rivers, the animals and everything.

2nd group of locals: The environment consists of the sky, the gods, the ancestors, the trees, the

rivers. We can even say all the things around us. ²⁰

The locals have a strong sense of what constitutes the environment even though they are unable to give a precise definition of what the environment is. At best, they are able to give a stipulative definition of what the environment is. Whiles some think of the environment as the physical space that surrounds them, others include the spiritual in their definition of the environment. As quoted above, the environment constitutes the trees, the rivers, the animals, the sky, the dead *et cetera* and also the spirits and the ancestors. The locals have a profound perception of the environment which at best manifests itself through the way of the life of the people. This way of life of the people is what I refer to as culture. In this sense, the aspects of the culture that was made clear from the data collection can be categorized under four main headings. These include the following; The Forest, Taboos, Festivals and Totemistic beliefs. I will now take a look at each of them in more detail.

4.2.1 The Kakum forest

“The forest is perceived as a spiritual force” as one opinion leader puts it. “It is amazing the kind of things that the forest inhabits”. To perceive the forest as a spiritual force has two meanings to the locals. First, it means that the forest including the trees and the animals are spirits in themselves and secondly, it means that the forest is inhabited by spirits. For the locals, the forest is the abode of spirits of both the gods and the ancestors. This way, the local people look to the forest not only for their physical needs such as food, clothing and shelter but also for their spiritual enrichment. The forest is believed to be the abode of many spirits or deities. As such, there are special days on which one is not suppose to visit the forest. On such days when a person visits the forest, chances are that the person might meet ‘something’²¹(‘biribi’ in the local dialect). This is well expressed by a hunter I interviewed. As he puts it;

²⁰ These were questions I posed to some of the groups I interviewed and the answers represent a summary of the general description of what those groups consider the environment to be. The above was quoted from my field notes.

²¹ ‘Something’ as used by the person I interviewed refers to a spiritual force.

[I] have seen it with my own eyes before. As the old adage goes, 'enye nea obofor ehu wo efuom nyinaa na o bekan'²². There was a time I went into the forest and encountered a spirit; as soon as I set eyes on it (the spirit), it disappeared. It was not the first time. There's been other times similar things have happened (My discussion with a group of local farmers from Abrafo, quoted from field notes, 02-07-04).

'This narration was attested to by others present who though they did not experience what this hunter was saying, strongly held the belief that the Kakum forest harbours spiritual forces. Different people experience the forest in different ways. Among the local people, the spiritual does not only refer to what is unseen. The belief that the spiritual can manifest itself in the physical is quite common. Thus some people experience the forest as huge animals which they claim could not be real, others heard strange voices and others saw spiritual images. This way, it can be said that the local have no concrete idea of what they called spirits. It meant different things in different contexts. Sometimes it meant strange happenings, at other times it referred to incomprehensible events.

According to the locals, this way of perceiving the forest among the locals was important in the sense that it contributed in a way to protecting the forest from desecration. It was a way of ensuring that people did not visit the forest at odd hours for nefarious activities. Special days were set aside when people were not permitted to go into the forest. "On such days, anyone who visited the forest was bound to encounter a spirit", said one local. This according to one opinion leader is what has kept the forest going. Lamenting, the leaders of Abrafo expressed concern about the extent of forest loss in the areas. They attributed this to commercialization of agriculture and the timber industry. This, they said, has contributed to the cutting down of more trees.

4.2.2 Taboos

The perception of local people about the environment also strongly manifests itself through the observance of taboos. In the villages of Mfuom and Abrafo, one could find taboos connected to several aspects of the environment. For instance it is a taboo to

²² 'enye nea obofor ehu wo efuom nyinaa na o bekan'. This is a popular Akan adage which literally means that 'the hunter does not tell all that he encounters in the forest'.

defecate in the forest because it is believed to be against the displeasure of ‘Asase Yaa’, the earth goddess. Among the Akans in general and Abrafo and Mfuom in particular, the belief in Asase Yaa is still dominant especially among the elderly. Asase Yaa is believed to be the goddess of the earth hence anything on the earth’s surface is attributed to her providence. She is the cause of fruitful harvest and displeasing her would mean poor harvests. The name Asase Yaa is an attempt to personify the earth goddess by assigning a feminine character to it. ‘Yaa’ is the name of a female born on Thursday. The earth is therefore regarded as a mother who provides for her children. At the same time she punishes her children for doing wrong. It is however important to stress that this notion ‘Asase Yaa’ is more common among the elderly.

Rituals are very often performed in her honour before and after the hunting seasons. There are some trees in the forest which are also prohibited from cutting. An example of such trees is the ‘nyame dua’ (literally meaning God’s tree). This tree is a special tree believed to be created by God and has been entrusted into the care of Asase Yaa. This tree possesses many medicinal properties and cures a lot of sicknesses. It is important that before one cuts any part of the tree, she/he seeks the permission of Asase Yaa through her priest or priestess to perform certain rituals. These taboos as the locals unanimously agreed were very good in shaping the environment. This way, there was some kind of regulation in the use of these special plants that enabled their preservation. ‘Some of the species are very rare’, added one local guard, ‘and the rare ones are the most precious’.

I asked about the validity of these taboos and their relevance to their contemporary society. The view of one elder of the town expresses this better;

[O]ur fathers had a lot of wisdom which enabled them to come up with some of these ideas to regulate the impact of man on the environment. But these young people of today are in the habit of flouting these because they feel they know. If they still obeyed these taboos, I don’t think we’d be experiencing these hardships we are facing today²³ (My discussion with some elders from Abrafo, quoted from field notes, 03-07-04)

²³ This quotation was translated from the local Akan dialect.

They elders added that since these values are about being lost, it is important that society finds something people can hold on to since the present idea of creating a park and preventing people from entering it seems to be doing more harm than good, retorted an indigene. The impression I got from my interaction with the local people was that people obeyed taboos because there was an element of fear associated with the violation of these taboos but once there was an indication that there is no personal harm associated with breaching any of these taboos, people were no longer apprehensive in disregarding these taboos. Thus taboos do not have a strong basis for their observance. The situation here can be likened to the dark ages.

4.2.3 Totemistic Beliefs

One cannot talk about the local's perception of the environment without talking about Totemistic beliefs. This is because the belief in totems among the local people is quite elaborate. Totems are plants or animals which are believed to be associated with a group of people such that these animals are respected or revered. Often times the nature of the animal is seen to be the nature of the clan. Hence a clan which has a lion as its totem is regarded as a very aggressive clan. Similarly, a clan which has a snake as a totem is regarded as very cunning. Most of the clans in the villages have totems which are respected. Respect for totems means that one is not suppose to kill or eat totems. If one came across a totem which was dead, it was treated as if it were a human being. A funeral could be organized for the totem when it is found dead. It was given a befitting burial according to the custom of the people.

It is interesting to know that over the years, totemistic beliefs among the local people have been a way of preserving very important species of both fauna and flora. This is because as they told me, they do not just select any animal as a totem but rather the selection of a totem was carefully done by their forefather who identified very rare species of plants and animals. By declaring them as totems, it prevented people especially those belonging to the clan from killing or eating them. Sometimes out of mutual respect for other clans, they do not eat totems of other clans. The linguist of Mfuom narrated one particular example. According to him, 'there is a totem which is hardly seen today. It is a

rare specie whose name I can hardly recall. It is forbidden to kill it. As soon as you meet it, it surrenders itself. But, one is not suppose to harm it'. People have hunted them to the extent that one can hardly see any.

4.2.4 Festivals

The festival celebrated by the people of Mfuom and Abrafo has elements that depict their perception of the environment. They celebrate two festivals; the Adae festival and the Odwira festival. The Odwira festival is supposed to be the big Adae that is celebrated annually. However, the Adae festival that is rather small and celebrated by each village is done at the end of every 40-day period based on the Akan calendar. At the end of the Akan calendar year, the big Adae which is the Odwira is then celebrated. Before the celebration of the festival, there are taboos regarding days when one is prohibited from entering the forest. During the celebration of the festival, libation is poured to the gods. Rituals are also performed to the gods and spirits of the ancestors on behalf of the people.

Libation is poured to the river gods as well as the spirits of the forests and the ancestors. Through the priest's communication with the gods people are made aware of environmental problems facing the communities. One central figure during the celebration of the festival is Asase Yaa²⁴.

4.3 Different Patterns of Perception among the Locals

There are different patterns of perception that came to light during my discussion with the local people. To begin with, there is a significant difference in perception between the old and the young. Whiles most of the elderly would conceive the forest or the environment, if you like, in spiritual terms, the young would conceive it in physical terms. Most of the young people do not subscribe to the idea of protecting the environment for the future generation. They believe in the here and now. Though they believe that environment may have been depleted, they are also more concerned about the

²⁴ Asase means land or earth and Yaa is a name given to a female born on Thursday. The assignment of Yaa to the earth is therefore a personification of the earth. Asase Yaa is regarded as a mother who nourishes the earth by bearing all the things on the land. At death she receives a person into her bosom. She determines how plentiful a harvest should be. It is therefore important not to offend her for, her wrath may come upon society.

present. Even among the young, there were those who were more concerned about the environment than others. Thus, as far as perception among the local are concerned, there are various views which itself serves as a source of conflict. The elderly perceive the environment differently from the young and among the young there are significant differences in how the environment is perceived.

To what extent people felt strongly about their perception on the environment also depended on one's level of exposure as well as level of education. Many of those who had strong perception of the environment and thus believed in all the associated practices were the older generation who are mostly not literate. They may be educated in their own way but have not been through formal education. Among these categories of people they believed that their action towards the environment was determined by the way they perceived the environment. Most of the younger generations who are educated or have had some form of formal education have little regard for the environment. Their actions towards the environment are not much based on the same perception as the older generation. Rather, they have their own perception based on the fact that in part, environmental resource utilization must benefit them. Their perception is not one of respect. It is based on what the environment can offer. A young person who had completed senior secondary school at the time of conducting the research retorted in my interaction with him that "only those who have not been to school would believe that there are spirits".

The family one came from also determined how one perceived the environment. For instance, most of the informants who came from Christian home were less inclined to believe in the supernatural idea of the environment in general and the Kakum forest in particular. Those who see themselves as Christians were people who affiliated themselves with the bible and felt obliged by biblical principles though not all observed these principles staunchly. On the other hand, people who were non-Christians had strong supernatural views about the environment. The non-Christians are those who for a want of a better term could be referred to as traditionalists. Even those traditionalists who have had some kind of Christian influence were quite moderate in their views on the supernatural idea of the forest.

Some of the people I interviewed also found it difficult to associate themselves with what they referred to as traditional notions of the environment. These were mostly people who considered themselves as ‘enlightened’. Enlightened in this sense refers to having had some form of a contact with either Christianity and/or urbanization. Such people viewed all the beliefs about the environment as primitive or idolatory. Even some of my old informant who happened to be elders of some churches referred to these beliefs about the environment as ‘bosòm sòm’ (idol worship). In an interview with a ‘returnee’, a young lady from the city (Accra), she noted that;

[T]here is no reason why a person living in this modern era should still believe in stones and trees. I think that people must travel. That is the only way they can come understand that there’s only one God (quoted from field notes 03-07-04)

From the different patterns of perception described above, I can conclude that the kind of perceptual conflict I set out to study was simpler than what was actually the case. Perception among the local people was quite diverse. Perception as a source of conflict does not occur only between local people and elites. Even among the locals themselves, there are different patterns of perception that perhaps has contributed (negatively) to local environmental resource management. It is therefore important that all these variations are taken into account in diagnosing these conflicts.

4.4 Changing Perceptions of the Environment among the Locals

Some of the locals (especially the aged) told me that the way people see the environment has changed over time. The views of most of the elderly people I spoke to can be captured in how an elderly man I spoke to in Abrafo puts it. The environment as we see it today has been very much affected due to ‘èni buaè’²⁵.

[N]owadays the young who have come on [sic] do not respect anything because they think they know. When you say this, they say that! They know

²⁵ ‘[È]ni buaè’ in twi, the local dialect means civilization. He sought to imply that civilization is the cause of changes in perception.

very little about what is going on around them. They do not obey the guidance of the elderly. I don't really know what they are taught in school. In those days when we were young, you couldn't go into the forest. You dare not! If you dared....! Through the wisdom bequeathed to us by our forefathers we were able to manage the things that nature has provided for us. But now (stretching his hand over a vast area) people have cut down all the trees. Some years ago these places were covered with trees. Very tall trees!! It was thick with trees. But now they are all gone. They are gone because no one respects the environment. 'Abine' (government) has allowed timber contractors to cut down all the trees. (Discussions with some old men from Abrafo, quoted from field notes, 03-07-04).

This man who seemed to be in his mid 80s attributes environmental problems to civilization. His views are not different from other elders of the town who believe that the environment has suffered some degradation and this is because the young men of today do not observe the norms of society. In the olden days there were a lot of dos and don'ts that influenced their actions. For instance, 'you don't sing whiles bathing because you die', 'you don't hit a pestle in an empty mortar because you hit your mum's head', you don't go into the forest on certain days because you meet spirit', 'you do not become an ancestor if you live recklessly'²⁶. They attribute many of the problems to civilization which comes through education. These, according to them, are the causes of environmental degradation since most of the youth in the village do not see why they should believe some of the traditional norms that are associated with the environment. Osofo puts it avidly when he retorted;

[I] do not see why I should believe that there are spirits in the forest. No spirit can harm me! The ghost of the dead has no power! If they did have power, they would not have died. (Personal conversation with a young man from Mfuom, quoted from field notes 15-06-04)

²⁶ Being an ancestor is an honourable position among both the living and the dead. One has to attain that position by fulfilling some criteria which includes dying at an old age and dying a natural death. A natural death is death not caused by disease or accident. Deaths caused by accidents and disease are believed to be caused by evil spirits. Anyone who dies like that is believed to have sinned.

Clearly, he does not believe in the kind of taboos that are imposed on local people. I presumed he was probably a pastor since Osofo is the local translation for a Pastor. However I understood from my conversation with him that he was not a pastor but acquired the name because of his strict observance of Christian values. Perhaps his Christian principles do not allow him to believe in other beings and spirits since he told me that ‘nyame nkoa na ò wò tumi’²⁷. Notwithstanding the Christian background of this young man, his view about the environment is essentially representative of the views of an average young man in both Abrafo and Mfuom. Most of the young men do not have a strong sense of adherence when it comes to beliefs in totems, ancestors and taboos. Most of them believe out of fear of the unknown. Some of the young people argued that;

[A]ll die be die! If one dies, he becomes powerless so we do not believe that the ancestor (nananom) can affect what we do. As for the animals they are nothing. They have no spirits. We kill them when we need them and no one can do anything to us. After all these do not bring us food (quoted from field notes 15-06-04).

In spite of these divergent views between the old and young in both Abrafo and Mfuom, both the young and the old articulated that action needed to be taken in respect of the environment. As to what kind of action needed to be taken, one of my key informants said;

[T]his park is good! It is an idea we all support but we don't like the way it's been carried out. What are we suppose to eat, and how are we suppose to live? Our whole life depends on the forest. That is where we get our food, our meat and medicine. At least they should allow us to take some of the things we need in the park. Look at me!! I am very sick. And I have been sick for a while now. Yet the medicine I need to cure my illness is in the park. I am not allowed to go into the park else I would be arrested (General theme

²⁷ ‘nyame nkoa na ò wò tumi’ means that only God has power.

that emerged from a group discussion on the 1-08-04. quoted from field notes).

The locals do not only disagree with the management of the national park but they disagree with the attempt to separate the people from the environment. For them, the resources should be managed for the benefit of the society. Their lives have been dependent on the land and still are dependent on the land. The creation of the park implies a creation of a separation between the environment and them which according to some of my informants ‘...is never going to work because soon we will mobilize the young men and go into the forest’.

The very people who have been responsible for damaging the environment are the same people who have come to create the national park to deprive us of our ‘daily bread’, said an opinion leader. “It is the government who allowed people to cut down the trees for sale in the cities. How could we have done this? We have no machines and can neither afford them. Where could we have taken the logs to? When the ‘Old men’²⁸ through their wisdom have fashioned out rule and taboos to enable us to regulate human activities in the environment, these loggers have flouted them without regard for the chiefs. If they do this how do you expect the young ones to follow suit”.

4.5 The Elites of the Park and the Environment

Once upon a time, man lived in harmony with nature. But today the environment is in jeopardy. What are we leaving behind for our younger generation? (An Elite Interviewee 01-07-04)

The environment in simple terms is the sum total of our surroundings which is constitutive of all that is natural. This is a summary of what the elites define the environment to be. The perception of the park managers on the environment is not different from what has been echoed over and over again by environmentalists. At Kakum, the managers also hold strong views about the environment. The environment is as a ‘complex web of life’²⁹ which is gradually being spoiled. The environment is in

²⁸ ‘Oldmen’ refers to the ancestors. Those who are dead and gone to their graves.

²⁹ These are the exact words of the Officer-in-charge of the Kakum National Park whose ideas about environmental conservation are very radical. He sees himself very much like what I refer to as an Eco-

serious crisis! ‘To get a sense of what I am talking about look at this picture’ said the Officer-in Charge of the Park.



Forest Cover

The forest cover in the 80s



Fig. 7

Kakum Forest

■ The remaining forest cove ■ The depleted area

Messiah. He sees himself as destined to save a morbid environment. He's been working with national parks and protected areas for many years in various parts of Ghana. This is what I gathered from my interaction with him.

These are satellite pictures that the Officer-in-charge of the national park presented, trying to give me an idea of the state of the environment in Ghana. According to him the entire area of southern Ghana used to be green with trees. However, the picture is different today. 'If the rest of the area had not been protected, we would not have had even a tree today'. The environment is totally depleted. Protection of the rest of the trees is the best way to ensure that future generations are treated justly. Some officials noted that,

today we complain that Cape Coast always suffers from water shortage. That is all due to the fact that the trees which use to serve as a watershed have all been cut. If this trend of abusing environmental resources is not curbed, I bet you! We'll be heading towards disaster and... (Interview with park officials on the 27-07-04, quoted from field notes).

This quotation from one of the elites I interviewed reflects the thinking of most of the workers in the park. The damage caused to the environment according to most of my elite informants is due to the fact that local people have not managed their resources properly. 'Today, most people talk about involving local people in resource management but no one asks; to what extents have local people managed their resources well?'

The elites in many ways can also be said to have a set to principle by which their perception of the environment is manifested. Clearly one of such ways is the protected area creation. The protected area is seen as a place where people come to relate with nature in a way that they could not anywhere in Ghana. It is a remnant of the wild and people who go there find it refreshing and fulfilling. As one of my informants puts, "Kakum is a wonderful place to be. To wake up in the morning and hear the birds sing is very beautiful!"

Some of the tourists (both local and foreign) who I spoke to, found the national park a nice place to be. Some of the foreign tourists who apparently were nature lovers had come all the way from Canada to see the much talked about Kakum National Park. For them, the national park was very inspiring. I spoke to other who also came from New Zealand to experience nature.

More information on the elite perception is used in the analysis that follows in the subsequent sections.

4.6 A Clash of Perceptions

The above discussion of the perception on the environment from the perspective of both the local people and the elites at the Kakum national park brings out very sharp differences which I see as an area of conflict. These areas are worth discussing further and should be understood as not just perceptual conflicts; but, these perceptions have influenced the kind of action that has taken place in respect of the environment over the past few years. It is a conflict between people (elites) who see themselves as ‘saviours’ of an ecologically morbid world and locals who are seen as ‘ecological demons’. The park managers see themselves as people called to protect nature against the ‘malicious’ activities of the local. They see the environment as one that is in danger hence called to save it. In this sense, they can be referred to as “Eco-Messiahs³⁰”.

In the previous section, I referred to the elites as Eco-Messiahs because in their view, they have come to save what the locals have not been able to save. According to the head of the management team, “formerly the number of these animals was very low due to hunting, farming and other traditional practices but now the population of animals have become big- this is the park’s purpose” (Interview with the some elites 24-04-04). Similarly, another member of the elite group added that, “researchers have proved that Ghana has lost about 80% of its vegetation”. Even now he added, ‘most of the forest reserves are gone. They have been replaced by cocoa farms’. It is only through such strict measures such as the one at Kakum that the problem can be solved.

The elites see the locals as destroyers of the environment while the locals see the elites, who they refer to as representative of the government, as the cause of the problems they are seeking to reverse. For the local people, they do not see why they should suffer from the problems that have been created by the elites. What exists at Kakum is perhaps mutual suspicion based on their perception of how people must relate to the environment.

³⁰ ‘Eco-Messiah’ is a term I coined to describe those who manage the Kakum National Park because they see their mission as one of salvation. Saving a world in crisis, danger or call it whatever you want. For them, this is the only way to enter the kingdom of increased biodiversity.

For the local people, Ingold's (1992) assertion mentioned in theory that enfolded in person's are the histories of their environmental relations and the vice versa is of high applicability. They perceive the environment as intertwined with their way of life. Everything in the environment should be used by man not in the sense of abusing the resources. Along with the usage of the environment, they propose sound management that is based on wise use rather than the creation of an 'island' that is separate from the people. 'For them this is not how it should work'.

Their socialization process forms the locals' perception of the environment. From childhood they learn to treat their environment with respect. They are taught to always pour the last drop of drink to the ancestors who are believed to be underneath the earth. They also do not go to the farm on Fridays and other sacred days set aside for the reverence of the gods of the earth. It is based on perception that they pour libation at the river Kakum during festive occasions. They are very much aware that at death, they would be put in the bosom of 'mother earth' where one joins the ancestors; if one led a 'good life'. A good life includes how one treats the environment. These are strong perceptions of the environment that informs what action is taken among the local people.

Having said this, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that among the local people, there are variations in respect of these perceptions. These variations are more pronounced among the youth. Most of the youth in Mfuom and Abrafo have migrated to Accra, the national capital, in search of greener pastures while others have moved to the regional capital Cape-Coast. But the perception of the few young people in the area seems to differ significantly from that of the older people. For most of the young people it's all about how to secure the future even it means exploiting the environment. Notwithstanding the perceptual variations among some sections of the locals, they all agree that they need to take the environment into account in their actions. They also agree that the environment is the source of their livelihood

The perception in relation to the future of the environment seems quite bleak. Yet they have hope which is typical of most of the people I interviewed. For most of them the

popular saying ‘debi debi è bè yè yìè’³¹ has a lot of meaning to them. They believe that we should go back to our old ways of doing things because it was best for the environment. For them, too much civilization can be bad. Using the old adage as they (referring to the old people in the villages) always like to express themselves ‘one should not try to look beyond his eyebrows’ for ‘no matter how big the eyes of a stranger are, he can never know the village better than its inhabitants’. These expressions have two meanings. First and in the context of civilization, it means that one should not think he/she know better. Secondly, it also means that one should not claim to know more than the inhabitants.

The perception of the environment among the locals which is quite strong clashes with that of the elites who want to blame the locals for the harm caused to the environment. To this extent the views of the elites are consistent with the assertion that local people have been responsible for the damage to ecosystems. Nevertheless, to what extent are these perceptions true especially given the fact that environmental perceptions are often distorted, misinterpreted and schematized (Downs and Stea cited in Chemers and Altman 1993)?

My discussions with the people revealed that local people have a strong perception of the environment. It also revealed that local people have their own system of natural resource management that is carried out by the chief and council of elders who are trustees. Their natural resource management is done through the enforcement of traditional norms and practices. This way, they ensure that the gods are not offended in anyway. However, most of the young people’s perception on the environment did not influence their action. Those who had some respect for the environment based on traditional beliefs did so out of fear of the unknown. They would not go into the forest just because they respect the gods but because of the fear of probably loosing their lives.

For many others, the fact that traditional values that reflect their perception of the environment are being eroded means the loss of respect for the environment. Previously, according to my informants, most people would troop into the village to observe or participate in the festival and other traditional practices but nowadays that is waning. This

³¹ debi debi è bè yè yìè is an expression of hope among the Akans generally. In this context it is used in reference to the environment to show that there is hope for the environment.

perhaps might be due to the fact that these traditional practices have lost appeal among the current generation. It can also be due to the influence of many factors such as education, western influence and the so-called civilization.

4.7 Perception, Policy and Power Relations

The difference in perception where local people are seen as a threat to the environment is probably one of the reasons why the national policy on conservation is silent on issues concerning local people. As mentioned in chapter two, one of the shortfalls of conservation is the lack of any provision made for local people.

The power relation between the local people and the government on the one hand; and the elites and the government on the other hand, are important as far as perception is concerned. It is important in the sense that if action is based on perception, then the extent to which a group can enforce their action is dependent on the power relations between that group and the power structures. This kind of power relation may be political, economic and social. However, it is important to talk about power relation in so far as perception determines action (Ingold 1992)

It is not difficult to see how power relations manifest itself in different ways as far as the conflict is concerned in both Abrafo and Mfuom. To begin with, the elites of the park and the national park agenda have been accorded a legal status. This means that it can sue and be sued. It is therefore an offence to undertake any activity that is contrary to the objective of the park. As it stands now, it is a criminal offence to take anything from the park. This offence is punishable by law and the park authorities have the police at their disposal to enforce the law. The park also has the political backing in that it is given due recognition by government. On the economic front the park receives subvention from the government annually.

On the international front it can be said that by signing the various international treaties, a park of the status of the Kakum national has an international backing. It receives funding from a number of international NGOs including the USAID, IUCN and others. This being the case, it can be said that in terms of power relations, the park

together with its authorities are well positioned to enforce whatever perception of the environment they have be it real or distorted.

At the other end of the tunnel are the local people who in my view are powerless. Indeed they are considered a nuisance. These villages have chiefs and opinion leaders who are their spokespersons. There is also an assemblyman who is their representation at the district level. These are the resources at their disposal to engage in the conflict with the parks authorities (and may be their machetes).

4.8 Summary

Differences in perception makes consensus difficult as far as natural resource governance is concerned. In so far as there are differences in perception of the environment in Kakum, there is always bound to be a conflict of action given that Ingold's (1992) assertion that perception determines action is true. At this stage it is also important that a high degree of empathy is exercised here. Local people's perception of the environment may be distorted as claimed by Downs and Stea (cited in Chemers and Altman 1993) but it is important to take into account the fact that they see it as such.

To create a national park that tries to separate local people from their environment is severing the links that bind people with their historical past that has made them who they are (Ingold 1992). The way of life of the people through which their perception of the environment manifests is cut. At Kakum now, local people are not allowed to perform rituals which they did in the Kakum river before the establishment of the park. They have been forced to 'move' the gods from their former location in the park to a new place in the town. It may seem an easy thing to do but one cannot estimate its impact on the way of life of the people.

Referring to Holy and Stuchlik's (1983) argument that there should be motivational factors to influence action, I can say that such factors abound among the local people in both Mfuom and Abrafo. The basis of their respect for the environment is their dependence on the environment for their livelihood. The reason for revering the environment may be instrumental or intrinsic but what should not be taken for granted is

that people's way of perceiving the environment in which they live is crucial in taking decisions that affect them.

To this end, I would conclude by saying that the current regime by which the park is created and managed falls short of this - taking local people's perception of the environment into account. It fails to take into account the fact that local people have some relationship with the environment. To say that local people have been the cause of environmental degradation may be a simplistic conclusion. The causes of environmental problems are multifaceted. What is required is to identify the weaknesses in the local people's perception on the environment and influencing such perceptions through education.

It also calls for an engagement with local people in finding alternative ways of ameliorating most of the problems that the park faces. As would be discussed in the next chapter, by taking into account local people's need and by helping them find alternative ways of life, the sustainability of the park to a large extent would be enhanced. As similar studies have also shown, involving local people in the management of the park can also be fruitful and gives local people an incentive to actively participate in the activities of the park.

Chapter 5

5.0 Local People, Management of Protected Areas and Cost and Benefit Sharing.

5.1 Introduction

To what extent have the local people of Mfuom and Abrafo been involved in the management of the Kakum National park? That is, if indigenous knowledge is vital as some scholars (Berkes1999, Arnesen 2000, Colchester 1997) have argued, then my research question becomes even more relevant. Relevant in the sense that, if indigenous people's knowledge is recognized as being invaluable then incorporating local people in the management of the park should be indispensable. This chapter analyses the extent to which local people have been involved in the management of the Kakum national park. This is one of the three issues to be addressed in this chapter.

Another issue that will be addressed in this chapter is an analysis of how cost and benefit disparities between local people and the managers of the Kakum national park present itself as a source of conflict. The assumption here is that for as long as the cost and benefit distribution are not even, there is likely to be a conflict. Thus I will focus on the extent to which the needs of the local people are factored into management processes and how issues that arise from these processes are resolved. In the end I would show that as the situation stands now, the costs to local people around the Kakum national park are high while the benefits are low if any at all.

The third issue to be dealt with in this chapter is poverty and environmental conservation. It explores how conservation projects like the one at Kakum can help to alleviate poverty levels of the people living around the national park. This way, I try to link conservation, poverty and sustainability. This means that if national parks are to be sustainable, it is important that parks' objectives are pursued alongside the poverty reduction strategies. This does not only improve the living conditions of the people living around the park but contributes to the long-term viability and sustainability of the national parks that concurs with the overall objective of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

5.2 Local People and the Management of the Park

This section looks at the extent to which the people of both Mfuom and Abrafo have been involved in the management of the park. By involvement, I mean two things. First, I want to explore how local people participate in the decision-making or planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of the Kakum national park. Secondly, I want to look at involvement in terms of the extent to which the indigenes directly or indirectly participate in the activities of the park.

The Kakum national park is managed by the central government through its institutions which are set up to undertake conservation activities. These institutions include the Department of Game and Wildlife and the Department of forestry which are under the Ghana Forestry Commission. There are other NGOs which are also actively involved in the management of the park. These NGOs are United States Agency for International Development, Conservation International, the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, the Central Regional Development Commission and the Smithsonian Institution. These institutions (both the government and the institutions) provide logistical and financial support to the park. USAID and Conservation International play a more active role in the affairs of the park.

The park itself is manned by an Officer-in-Chief who is the head of the park and sees to the day-to-day affairs of the park. He has men on the ground who see to the running of the park while he takes care of the administrative aspects of the park. A number of park guards are employed to patrol the park daily. Information gathered from the field indicated that most of these guards are employed from outside Mfuom and Abrafo. These guards are responsible for bringing to book any illegal activity that goes on in the park. Most of them are located at strategic positions in the park. Others who directly or indirectly take part in the management of the park include those who are employed at the cafeteria and those at the tollgate. Essentially, these are the people involved in the management of the park.

An important issue that came up during my discussion with the local people is that they have been totally ignored in the management of something that they perceive to belong to them. The decision-making process is largely dependent on the NGOs and the

government. The chiefs as well as the opinion leaders are largely ignored from the decision making process, manifesting Pimbert and Ghimire's (1997) assertion that only in rare cases are local people involved in the designation and creation of protected areas.

When the park authorities as well as the NGOs were approached to investigate the reasons for the exclusion of local people in the management of the park, one important theme emerged. The reason was based on the fact that local people have not managed their resources properly. Though some of the officials of the park acknowledge the value of local knowledge, they vehemently disagree involving the locals in the management of the park. Local people cannot be trusted when it comes to the management of natural resources because of their record of mismanagement. But need they be excluded because they have not managed their resources well in the past? There is also the notion of local people conspiring with their fellow locals to raid the park.

The exclusion of local people based on the perception of not having managed their resource well in the past overlooks the fact that there are different forms of management. As noted in the theoretical chapter, there is passive participation which involves sharing information, participation in information given involving consultations, participation by consultation which is based on joint assessment, participation for material incentives which involves shared decision-making, functional participation which is based on collaborative mechanisms, interactive participation which is based on empowerment mechanisms and self-mobilisation which is initiated by local people (Arnesen 2000). The indication is that local people are completely excluded from management because of their reputation of mismanagement of their natural resources.

The chief of Mfuom noted that "there are only two people from this town who are working in the park and these two people do not even originate from this town. They are settlers who have come from outside". He added that it is important that the youth of the town are employed by the park authorities since that is the only white collar activity that exists in the town. "Currently, we have a lot of young men and women who have completed their education and have no jobs to do. Meanwhile, all the people working in the park have been employed from outside. This is not good at all. If you take our land, at least you should make us benefit by employing the sons of our land" (02-07-05).

The chief of Mfuom further informed me that the people of Abrafo are those who have benefited from employment the most; meanwhile most part of the land on which the park is situated belongs to them (the people of Mfuom). Interaction with the people of Abrafo on the other hand revealed otherwise. The people employed in the park are not as many as I was made to believe by the chief of Mfuom. In terms of population, Mfuom is smaller than Abrafo and so naturally, if appointments were made on the basis of population size one would expect that Abrafo would have more people. Nevertheless, that was not even the situation. The people of Abrafo were equally marginalized when it came to participating in the management of the park.

Findings from the park reveal that there is total exclusion of local people in the management of the Kakum national park at all levels. From the decision-making stage through the planning, implementation and monitoring stages, local people are not represented neither are local people allowed to make an input in the entire process. This probably accounts for the lack of support which Colchester (1997) identified as one of the benefits of participation. This being the case, the threat by local people to invade the park and destroy it undermines the sustainability of the park which is also emphasized by Chatty and Colchester (2002). The passive role played by local people in the management of the park makes the local people see the park as an 'island'.

The lack of participation (passive, information giving, material incentive, functional or joint assessment) accounts for some of the conflicts that exist in and around the park. Local people do not understand the objectives of the park therefore they poach, hunt illegally and connive with some of the guards to undertake illegal felling of trees in the forest. Local people could in fact be guards of the park if they are educated about the needs for conservation-participation by information sharing (Arnesen 2000). Many of the ordinary people displayed a lack of (or inadequate) knowledge of the need for conservation. Only few locals can understand and believe that the world is in an ecological crisis and therefore needs sustainable development.

For the locals, managing environmental resources for the benefit of future generations is important to the extent that present needs are met. Sustainability does not go beyond their locality. The notion of sustainability and the need for conservation is

important for the locals as far as they are able to have a meal on their table. It also means that they are able to educate their children (paying school fees as they put it) and providing for their healthcare which was inadequate in both Mfuom and Abrafo.

When local people are not allowed to participate in the management of the park it makes it difficult for them to understand the objectives of the projects. Therein lies the conflict since suspicion develops among local people about the true intension of the park (Colchester 1997)³². If local people are allowed to take part in the running of the park they tend to understand the issues that are being dealt with. Local people are better disposed to support the project when they are more informed about the entire project.

5.3 Cost and Benefit Sharing

The situation at the Kakum national park reveals gross disparities when it comes to cost and benefit sharing. Local people are bearing most part of the cost while the benefits from the park are enjoyed by the government, tourists and researchers. The situation supports Anderson and Grove's assertion that there are gross disparities in the sharing of cost and benefits in most protected areas in Africa. The pattern of cost and benefit sharing is a vivid replication of what they (Anderson and Grove) talked about. The costs to local people have been a source of discontent among local people. One of my informants at Mfuom lamented,

[W]e are suffering a lot in the hands of these people and though we have asked the government to do something about the situation, nobody listens to us. Our problems keep recurring every year and no one helps us. We do not get anything from the park. Not even a pessewa³³!! (Mfuom, conversation with an Elderly man 29-06-04).

This statement was in reference to the government and the park's authorities. The concern of this informant was that though some of their problems keep recurring, nothing

³² Colchester (1997) indicates that participation was used as measure to control poaching and promote an alternative local economy based on ecotourism.

³³ Pessewa is the basic unit of money in Ghana. A hundred pessewas thus makes a cedis which is the main currency of Ghana.

was being done to address it. The informant also stressed the fact that they receive no benefit from the park. This informant like many of the locals was quite unhappy about the state of affairs as far as the park was concerned. In relation to costs to local people, two main areas can be identified. The first being the elephant raid and the second being the inability of locals to meet some of their vital needs. These two issues would be discussed in some more details in the following section. However, one thing that should be kept in mind is that in the midst of all these, the authorities perceive the problems differently. Some of the officials are of the view that the locals are the cause of their own problems and others think that the problems are perceived and are not real. My findings from the area however revealed that these are real issues that demand attention.

5.3.1 The Elephant Raid

As noted in the previous section, one of the main sources of conflict between the local people and the park authorities has to do with elephants raiding the farms of the locals. The main occupation that takes place in the Kakum area is farming. Most of the locals have their farms situated close to the national park. With the increasing number of animals in the park especially elephants, most of the farms near the park are often destroyed. The destruction normally takes place between the months of June and August because that is normally the wet season in the country and the elephants would usually go looking for food.

Local people whose farms have been destroyed by the elephants both in the past and the present complain that the elephants do not only destroy their farmlands but also destroy properties of some of the inhabitants living around the park. They emphasized that the elephant is a very destructive animal and nothing prevents it from doing what it wants to do. Both local people and officials of the park mentioned that the elephants are protected animals and hence they are not supposed to be killed. It is also a criminal offence to kill it. These being the case, local people have no choice but to watch the elephants destroy till they return into the park (Interview with some local groups 10-07-04).



Fig. 8 Picture shows a farm near the Kakum National Park that has been destroyed by elephants. (Photo: Stephen Babson).

At the time of my visit to both Mfuom and Abrafo, I witnessed some of the farms that had been destroyed by the elephants. The picture above shows a farm near the Kakum national park that had been destroyed by elephants.

For the local people, the issue of destruction of farmlands is not as serious as the refusal by the government to pay any form of compensation to those whose farms and properties have been destroyed. This is one major area of conflict. Officials of the park noted that the local are the cause of their own problems since they farm too close to the park. They accused the locals of even encroaching on the buffer zone that has been created between the communities and park. This is why, according to the officials, it is difficult to pay any form of compensation to the affected people.

Another cause of this problem according to officials of the park is from poaching by local people. They (the officials) mentioned that poachers in the park scare away elephants. Elephants being very fast and scared are made to flee hundreds of kilometers away. In the process, these elephants sometimes stray into the town. They therefore

argued that if locals could stop poaching then there would be a significant reduction in the raiding of farms and homes by elephants.

Many of the locals emphasized that there has been a continuous attempt by park official to extend the interface between the park and the farm areas thereby locating the locals' farms in the buffer zones. In the end local people are accused of situating their farms near the park. The situation has been one of a standoff between local people and the government about issues of compensation. In an interview with officers at Conservation International, some of them noted that the conflict in Kakum is perceived. However majority of these officers noted that the problem has to do with land use.

The Chief of Mfuom, supported by the Queen mother has declared that they would mobilize the youth of the area to go into the park and wage a war with the guards and other officials. The chief of Mfuom noted that "even Jesus Christ was killed so if park officials killed him, that would not be a big deal". Whiles the officials of the park believe that the local people can be a threat to the park, they are reluctant to give in to the demands of the locals for any form of compensation. This can be understood in the light of the fact that officials of the park have the state institutions such as the police and the military at their disposal. Officials informed me that if that happened, it would not be the first time since, Krowa another village near the park acted the same way which led to the death of a park guard. "We shall bring the soldiers", said one officer, "and we will show them where power lies".

Even though the issue of elephant raid is one of the contentious issues which prevails in and around the Kakum Park, it still persists and is likely to be so unless a consensus is reached between local people and the government represented by park officials.

The problem of elephant raiding notwithstanding some of the old guards of the park, told me that there have been several attempts at trying to find ways of preventing elephants from raiding people's homes. Nevertheless, all these attempts have proven futile. Currently, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) is undertaking a programme to educate farmers on how to protect their farms from elephant raids. The programmes which is called the Farmers Livelihood Project is yet to be assessed to see its success.

5.3.2 The Park and local peoples' Needs

With the creation of the park, local people have been stopped from undertaking certain activities in the park that are considered detrimental. Before the creation of the park for instance, local people performed rituals in the river Kakum that passes through the park. This ritual is important because it is central to the celebration of the local festivals-Adae. Local people have been forced to 'relocate' the gods elsewhere in the town. The relocation of the gods overlooks the important relationship between people and their gods vis à vis the importance of the cultural construction of a place (Bidlsten 2002). It also ignores the cultural matrix that Theodossopoulos (2002) mentions in theory. This can be closely linked to McNeely & Miller's (1984) assertion that human needs assessment are seldom incorporated in the planning of conservation programmes.

The relocation of the gods has also impacted on the local tradition in the sense that it has led to a loss of respect for the river gods. The previous location was in the deep forest where people were scared to visit. But now the 'gods' have been brought closer to town. As the old adage goes 'familiarity breeds contempt'. An elder of the town told me that the relocation has negatively affected the respect for the gods. The loss of respect of the gods means that divinities as a source of morality is weakened. This also affects environmental norms that are derived from respect for the gods. It also means that the normal way of doing things in the park have been tempered with. Though it may have been easy relocating the gods, one cannot estimate the cost of this relocation to the locals. The cost is invaluable.

Another issue that cannot escape being mentioned is the locals' dependence on the forest. Before the creation of the park, the locals depended on the park for some of their physical needs like food, meat, fruits and herbs. Now, it is an offence to take anything from the park. People are criminalized for taking herbs from the park. In an interview with the park manager, he admitted that it is a criminal offence to take anything from the park (Interview with Park Manager 10-07-04).

Officials recounted how on various occasions local people were arrested by the park guards and sent to the police station. He was however quick to add that it is at his discretion to permit people to pick certain vital herbs from the park. According to the

officials, it is only humane to allow people to take herbs from the park if only they are able to prove that they really needed them. People are also made to take samples to propagate on their farms. This is something the park officials are very strict on. The park officials are strict on people picking things from the park.

What it means is that, it is at the discretion of the officer-in-charge of the park to decide when and who to take something from the park. There are no laid down procedures for picking vital resources from the park. Local people are made to understand that ‘nothing goes out of the park and nothing comes in’. For the local people this is unfair. They lamented at the fact that even in their poor condition they are still made to suffer at the hands of park officials.

There have been various instances where the local have had conflicts with officials of the park because they picked things from the park. According to the queen mother of the village who was sick at the time of my visit, local people are indeed suffering. She noted that she had been sick for almost two months and the medicine she needed was in the forest. She could however not go into the forest because she was scared of the park guards who would arrest her. The locals refuted the officials’ statement that they were made to go into the park with permission.

The situation in Mfuom and Abrafo affirms the assertion made by Ghimire and Pimbert (1997) that ‘western’ approach to conservation in developing countries has had adverse effects on food security and livelihood of local people. It further confirms that fact that national parks established on indigenous lands have denied local rights to resources. It has turned local people from hunters and cultivators to poachers and squatters (*ibid*).

5.3.3 Revenue Disbursement

My estimate based on turnout on the day I visited the park indicated that there is high revenue which goes to the park officials every year. Officials declined to give exact figures about their average annual revenues. However, I visited on the 1st of July which was a republic day in Ghana. Republic days are normally holidays when school children as well as workers take time of their checkered schedule to visit places such as the

national park. This day according to the officer-in-charge of the park is one of the busiest days. Given the fact that Ghana enjoys a lot of holidays every year, one can reasonably assume that turnout at the park are always high. I was also informed that a lot of research activities go on in the park. For such activities, moneys are collected from institutions and individuals who wish to undertake such activities.

One of my main concerns during the fieldwork was how the money is disbursed and to what extent local people benefited from such revenue. This I hoped would help me answer the question as to how cost and benefit are distributed between local people and managers of national park.

Revenue collected from the park goes directly into the government coffers where it is used for the overall development of the country, said the park officials. The reason being that the Government, (represented by the forestry commission), does not want to set any precedence which would create problems in the future. According to government officials,

[T]here are a number of protected areas in the country which do not generate revenue. Local people around those areas derive nothing from the park. Giving money to local people around the Kakum national park would create the impression among other indigenous communities around other protected areas that government gives money to local people around protected areas (Interview with officials of the Wildlife Department 24-07-04).

This in their opinion would create problems for the park which might have serious implications for national parks in the country. It might be dangerous for other conservation projects.

Based on the reason stated by park officials, Mfuom and Abrafo have not benefited directly from the park in terms of its revenue generation. In an interview with local people, they corroborated the assertion made by park officials. They reiterated that as far as revenue generation was concerned, they have not benefited from the park. The elders of Abrafo were quick to add that the only benefit they may have derived from the park was the provision of a toilet facility. Park officials did not provide this. It was provided

by a tourist who upon seeing how deprived the area was, donated the toilet facility which is the one and only 'decent' toilet in Abrafo.

Notwithstanding the reason cited by park officials that they do not want to create any precedence, the fact still remains that all the benefits in terms of revenue accrue to the government. This supports the argument by Anderson and Grove that benefits from protected areas in terms of revenue go to the government.

5.3.4 The Cocoa Project

One of the measures which according to Conservation International (CI) is being undertaken by park officials to solve the problems around the park is the creation of what is called the Cocoa Project. It is a joint project between the USAID and C.I. This project in my view, increases the costs to local people which Anderson and Grove (1987) mentioned in the long-run.

The main idea behind the cocoa project is to plant cocoa trees in the interface between the park and areas where local people undertake their farm activities. The reason is that cocoa trees reduce the rate of deforestation. In addition, cocoa trees would also serve as shed and habitat for the forest animals while at the same time generating income for farmers. Local people are therefore being encouraged to plant more cocoa trees at the interface of the park rather than food crops.

One of the main problems in respect of this project is that it has long-term implications on food security in the area. With the increased conversion of food crop lands into the cultivation of cash crop, there would be little land available for food. This means that in the long run, food supply in the area would be reduced in marginal terms and this is likely to affect the well being of local people.

Secondly, even though the cocoa project has a good intention it may not contribute significantly in achieving the park's objectives in the long run. This is because the annual nature of cocoa harvest means that there will be only one source of income available to farmers in a year. This may not be adequate to fend for the large families in the area. The resultant effect would be that people would still be dependent on the park for their

livelihood. Thus the cocoa project alone is not sufficient enough to help achieve the park's objectives.

What is required is a holistic approach that takes into account long-term income generating activities for local people. A combination of such projects and the cocoa project, which is being piloted perhaps, would be more sustainable. This way, conservation projects would have been blended with development that is the main advocate of the Bali conference. As it stands now the cocoa project is only aimed at protecting the park which is inadequate.

5.4 Poverty, Environmental Conservation and Development

Environmental officials claim that attempts are being made by government to integrate conservation with development. As part of these measures, they propose to undertake some job creation activities like the construction of a hotel near the park. This according to government officials would create employment for many of the local people and get the young people of the area off the streets.

Officials also believe that 'national parks are a catalyst for rural development'. By creating national parks, it serves as an opportunity for local people to establish community eco-based projects. The park has facilitated the construction of roads and opened up the farm areas to markets. 'Without the park, it might have taken a long time for these communities to have these things' said one official.

In spite of all the talk about development being integrated with development, the people of Mfuom and Abrafo live in poverty. Both local people and officials of the park could not point at one single project that local people have benefited from (perhaps apart from the road leading to the park). There is no project that is directly geared towards improving the people's lives.

As noted in the preceding chapters, Poverty, injustice, environmental degradation, and conflict interact in complex and potent ways (WCED 1987). One of the points that have been emphasized throughout this study is the fact that the new conservation approach seeks to integrate conservation objective with development especially among those living in and around protected areas. This idea has been recurred at several

international fora such as the Bali conference³⁴ and other IUCN fora (including the 12th General Assembly in Kinshasa, Zaire), at the local level conservation with development fails to manifest itself. Though the Kakum Park has been in operation over a decade, its establishment is yet to benefit local people.

The people of both Mfuom and Abrafo still live in poverty. In this context, poverty refers to the inability of local people to meet basic needs such as health care, education and healthy food. Basic social amenities are also lacking. There are no recreational facilities and this also probably accounts for the high birth rate among the youth in the area. Teenage pregnancy is high and child malnutrition is also on the increase. Common diseases among children include Kwashiorkor which results from lack of protein and marasmus. The fact is that, the park has made little attempt at integrating conservation project with development. Can the excuse of avoiding precedence be acceptable?

This question is interesting in the sense that there are several ways by which conservation projects can help in alleviating poverty among local people. One of the possible ways is by identifying potential sources of income generating activities among local people and helping them promote them. After interacting with local women, one of the viable areas identified was the 'elephant dung business' which most of them are engaged in. This business has the potential of providing alternative source of livelihood without endangering the park.

According to local women, when the elephants come to the town to eat as well as destroy property, they often defecate before leaving. Local women collect the dung, dry them in the sun for days and then pound them. They dilute them with water and other local substances, bottle them and sell them. This, according to them, is able to cure a lot of diseases. 'This has been a good source of income since people from Abidjan often come to buy them', said one woman. But one of the main constraints in enhancing this business is the lack of capital to modernise their production systems. They also lack knowledge on how to organize small-scale businesses. These are areas which the park officials can assist without necessarily giving out funds.

³⁴ Bali Conference was the World National Parks congress which was held in the capital of Indonesia in 1982.



Fig. 9A picture showing the process of drying the elephant dung by local women in Mfuom (Photo: Stephen Babson).

One other potential area through which poverty in the area can be reduced is through the production of palm oil. The area around the park is very fertile for the cultivation of palm fruits and as such, most people are engaged in its cultivation. Most of the women are also engaged in the production of palm oil. Their current levels of production are just enough to meet their household needs. Meanwhile, palm oil is on high demand in the urban areas. Industries such as Unilever, Ghana need palm for the manufacturing of soap to the extent that they import. Yet these opportunities are left to slip by while local people continue to live in deprived conditions. This is another area where the park can assist by helping the local people form cooperative groups of productive units. These units can then be assisted in sourcing loans which can be used in expanding their production base.

These two examples are among the many opportunities to alleviate poverty which are made to slip by. To this extent, and on the basis of my findings, I would disagree with Anderson and Grove's (1987) view that in the African context wildlife and wilderness preservation is giving way to broader discussion linking conservation to the process of

rural development and the survival of agrarian societies. I would say that as far as integrating conservation with development, the Kakum Park has failed to assist the local people improve their livelihoods. I would conclude by adding that in Ghana, conservation with development as advocated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is just a political slogan which lacks expression at the grassroot level.

5.5 The Conflict at Kakum, Sustainability and Environmental Security

Asking about how sustainable the Kakum national park is, I was told by some of the officers of the park that ‘if the Yellowstone was, why not Kakum’? Information from field indicates that the conflict between local people and the managers of the Kakum national park is likely to undermine the long-term sustainability of the park. The various conflict areas which have been neglected over the past decade are a threat to the park. This is supported by the statements made by the ordinary inhabitants of the park as well as the chiefs and opinion leaders of the area. Many of the tourists whom I interviewed also noted that the current approach to the management of the park impedes the long-term sustainability of the park. Most of them agreed that if they were in the shoes of the local people they would have acted the same way but razing down the park is not the best option. Some of them propose dialogue between local people and officials of the park.

Building consensus between local people and park officials seems to be a problem due to mutual suspicion that exists between both parties. Park officials do not regard local people as partners in trying to protect the environment. Local people are rather regarded as a threat to the environment. Local people on the other hand, see park officials as insensitive to their plight and therefore are enemies of the communities. As long as this continues to be the situation, the sustainability of the park cannot be guaranteed.

In terms of security, the conflict in Kakum has implications at three different but interrelated levels; the individual; collectivities or group; and the state. At the level of the individual, such conflicts affect people in the sense that it renders them vulnerable. If people cannot fetch herbs from the forest because the forest is protected, it makes them susceptible to acute illness. In this sense, they become vulnerable and are threatened. This threat to the health of the individual is an environmental insecurity issue since it results

directly or indirectly from an environmental conflict and also affects the survival and well being of the individual.

At the level of collectivities, the conflict affects the identity of the group which in this case, involves the people of Mfuom and Abrafo. The identity of a people is reflected through their belief systems and cultural practices. If aspects of the people's culture are affected, then the identity of the people are also affected. Identity is the way people see themselves-the groups they feel a part of, the significant aspects of themselves that they use to describe themselves to others. Distinction is often made between collective identity, social identity, and personal identity. However, all relate in one way or another to a description of who one is, and how one fits into his social groups and society over all. That is, at the level of collectivities, the identity of the people is somewhat affected because components of how they describe themselves become disintegrated. This also has the implication of leading to a loss of social cohesion and community solidarity.

As already mentioned in chapter two, the severity of the conflict in Kakum can be measured by the fact that it has led to the death of one park official. This incident culminated in park officials being armed to protect themselves. Local people are also seeking ways to invade the park even if it means building arms. Thus at the level of the state, the conflict has the potential of taking a violent tone which can further lead to a deteriorating situation. The local people of Mfuom have threatened to go into the park and raze it down. If this happens there is likely to be a clash between the local people and the police or the military. In a region that is prone to ethnic conflicts and tribal wars, these conflicts have the potential of escalating.

The conflict in Kakum therefore has serious potential implications for the security of the individual, the groups or collectivities and the state.

5.6 Summary

This section has dealt with three main areas of conflict. It identified management and costs and benefits sharing as sources of conflict in Kakum. It also dealt with issues of poverty and environmental conservation where I argued that if conservation is to succeed it must also identify potential poverty reduction activities that can help improve the

livelihood of people living in and around the kakum national park. I further discussed some areas where I think could be focused in poverty alleviation.

I identified some main areas where cost and benefit imbalance have been a source of conflict. These areas included revenue sharing, local people's livelihoods, elephant raid and the cocoa project. In all these areas, local people have been those who have borne the costs. The benefits of prestige and revenue all go to the government. Aesthetic benefits go to tourists and academic institutions and research institutions benefit from research opportunities. How do local people benefit from the park?

I noted from my interaction with the local people from Abrafo that the community has not benefited from the park. The officials told me that revenue from the park goes directly to the central government where it is disbursed for the overall development of the country. As far as living on the park is concerned, local people cannot be trusted and are therefore seen as a threat to the park. In other disputing areas, local people are seen as those at fault. Local people are not partners in conservation but enemies of conservation. Therein lays the conflicts.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the politics of power relations does not give local people a say in this matter. This is why local people have threatened to take up power in their own hands. Even though this may not be the right thing to do, they seem to have no choice at this stage. Perhaps, what is required is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) which can advocate on behalf of local people. However, the NGOs must ensure that they focus on the real issues because in other parts of Africa where similar situations have occurred the advocacies of NGOs have been geared towards a different purpose. Where NGOs have moved in to help indigenous people like the Bushmen in Botswana, it has been driven by the desire to observe indigenous people in their natural environment rather than seeking the interest of these indigenous people.

In spite of the fact that some NGOs have failed in the pursuit of the interest of indigenous people living in some protected areas, this should not make us despair. There may be other well-meaning NGOs out there which can help since this appears to be the only hope for indigenous people. If some of the officials and institutions like Conservation International agree that the problem in Kakum is a land use problem then

there should be a move to solve this problem by providing alternative sources of livelihood for local people.

Chapter 6

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Concluding remarks

As a recapitulation of my objectives, I set out to answer one main question. I wanted to find out the sources of conflicts between local people and managers of the Kakum national park and the impact of the park on local people and based on this prescribe possible ways of ameliorating the situation. The preliminary presentation of theories on sustainable development, cost and benefit imbalance and conflicts showed that the following supplementary questions needed to be asked to help address the main question; a) to what extent can the conflict in Kakum be attributed to differences in perceptions on the environment? b) How does cost and benefit disparities lead to conflicts? c) To what extent have local people been involved in the management of the Kakum national park? This chapter of my study is more of an evaluation to assess the extent to which my research questions were answered and make appropriate recommendations.

Given the complex nature of the problem under study, eclecticism as an approach was inevitable. I therefore borrowed different concepts from different disciplines to help me solve my puzzle. Development theory of sustainability from which emerged ideas of conservation was used to explain that where costs and benefits of conservation are not evenly shared among the various stakeholders there is likely to be a conflict situation. The theory revealed that local people are not only evicted from their land but when they do, they are often uprooted because they lose their livelihoods and suffer from ‘grieving-for-a-lost-home syndrome’ (World Bank Report cited in Pimbert & Ghimire 1997) among other effects.

The concept of sustainable development which I noted as being one of the driving forces behind conservation as I argued in chapter three has disturbing underlying assumptions which have to be brought to the fore. For instance to say that the world is in an ecological crisis raises further questions. Crisis for whom? Clearly, this assumption underlying the concept of sustainable development is anthropocentric. The concept, by inferring that ecosystems are complex, assumes that man can understand nature which in

my view is difficult to agree with. Ecosystem processes are difficult to comprehend but to say it is complex is to claim knowledge of it which as I argued, is also disturbing. This makes the concept of sustainable development a weak foundation for the conservationist paradigm.

The concept of perception was also borrowed from the discipline of psychology to explain that where there are differences in perception, there are bound to be conflicts since according to Ingold (1992), perception determines action. Though other scholars contend this argument³⁵, Ingold asserts that people's way of relating to the environment is largely influenced by their perception of it. This being the case, I noted that where there are differences in the perception of the environment, there are bound to be conflicts.

Another theory that I considered relevant in explaining the conflict in Kakum was in the area of alternative development. The concept of participation was used to explain the fact when local people are excluded from projects such as conservation, it often leads to a situation where local people become apathetic to the project. This apathy can lead to a situation where there is lack of support for projects and can bring about conflicts.

Where such conflicts occur, I argued that it has varied implications for environmental security. Though the debate on the expansion of the term security to cover issues regarding the environment is still ongoing, to the extent that environmental security is said to include threats and vulnerabilities to the individual, the conflict in Kakum becomes an environmental insecurity issue which is likely to negatively affect the country. One may ask; in what way the conflict can affect the country? For instance, from my discussions with local people in Mfuom, they complained that the park is situated on their land yet they do not benefit from it. The people of Abrafo also claimed the land was theirs. In a country where land is an important resource, land disputes can generate violent conflict in the central region where Kakum national park is situated. This affects the country to the extent that resources for the country's development would be diverted; leaving other important areas such as health, education *et cetera* in deprivation. In fact, there are different ways of looking at it but what is important is that conflict like the one in Kakum must be nipped in the bud.

³⁵ For a full version of the debate on perception see Chapter 3.

It is within this framework that I sought to analyse my empirical findings. My findings revealed that the establishment of the Kakum national park indeed is a source of conflict between managers of the park and the local people who live around the park. The findings indicated that the sources of conflict are diverse but for the purposes of this study, I had to concentrate on those areas that would enable me answer my research questions. In respect of my research questions therefore, I identified perception, costs and benefit disparities and management tenure as the main sources of conflict between managers of the park and local people.

As discussed in chapter four, my findings showed that differences in perception play a significant role as far as the conflict in Kakum is concerned. It was revealing to know that not only did the perception of local people sharply contrast that of the elites but also, among local people, there were significant variations in perception. The differences in perception among the local people are influenced by sociological, cultural and religious factors. However, generally, local people's perception of the environment is largely depicted through their way of life; their culture.

The elites on the other hand, have their own perception of the environment. Their perception on the environment is not significantly at variance with the generally held perception of an environment in crisis. They particularly agree with the notions of ecological crisis as enshrined in the WCED Report (1987) and which has been the source of Ghana's policy on the environment. It was also insightful to note that the elites had their own taboos which are closely linked to their view of national parks and what it symbolizes - a place of inspiration.

In chapter five, the discussions on local people, management of protected areas and cost and benefit sharing revealed that apart from being ignored in the management of the national park, cost and benefit distribution to a large extent remains uneven. Here, I observed that the discussion in the theoretical frame is manifested in Kakum and its environs. Thus costs are borne by local people while the benefits go to tourists, governments and researchers. I observed that the benefits of revenue go to the government, the benefits of aesthetics go to tourists and the benefits of research go to researchers. Local people on the other hand bear the costs of conservation. We also saw

in chapter five that the costs of elephant raid are borne by local people without any compensation. Their extent of subsistence has also been limited by the lack of access to the Kakum forest. It was also discussed that well-intended projects like the cocoa project constitutes cost to local people in the long run.

Conservation objectives are undermined when local people's needs and rights are ignored (Chatty & Colchester 2002). Local people have lost their livelihoods or are totally restricted from resource use, they suffer from elephant raids which lead to loss of property with no compensation and have been variously described as 'poachers', 'thieves' and 'criminals'. This, as I mentioned in chapter 3 supports Anderson and Grove's (1987) theory that the costs and benefits of conservation vary considerably between different segments of society, both national and international.

Another interesting outcome of the study is that, in spite of calls for the involvement of local people in the management of natural resources as noted in Arnesen's (2000) exposé in chapter three, the local people living around the Kakum national park have been totally ignored in the management of the park. I reported officials of the park to have argued that local people have not managed their resources well in the past and are therefore incapable of doing so now. Against this background, my findings reveal that there is no form of participation.

Hunsicker and Ngambesso (1993) stress that in all projects dealing with the management of natural resources, it is absolutely necessary to gain the support of the local population (cited in Ghimire and Pimbert 1997). Contrary to their suggestion, and as revealed in my findings in chapter five, local people in Kakum have not been involved in the management of Kakum national park. This lack of participation in the management of the park is a source of apathy among local people and is consequential to the lack of support and the presence of suspicion that has engendered the conflict. The findings are again supportive of the theoretical perspective which I presented to show that where there is a lack of participation there is bound to be lack of support that can lead to conflicting situations.

Without substituting the assumption that all indigenous peoples are 'environmental destroyers' with a simplistic notion that all indigenous peoples are 'noble ecologist', joint

participation as a favoured alternative to the current approach to protected area management is lacking in the Kakum project. By advocating joint participation, I do not overlook the difficulty in implementing participatory projects. In fact, Colchester (1997) observes that participatory conservation initiatives have proven very difficult because they have to bridge very wide cultural divides, as well as accommodate both divergent players in the local politics and economic realities.

Having come this far, mention must be made of the fact that the theoretical perspective presented in this study does not help me to understand other important areas of the study which needed to be addressed. Of these areas, the theory fails to address issues regarding indigenusness, indigenous people and the rights that must be accorded to indigenous peoples. Throughout the study, the theory presented assumes that when local people are forced to migrate due to the creation of a protected area, they become 'uprooted'. This notion of uprootedness according to Malkki (1992) is routinely conceived in botanical metaphors. She argues that people are often thought or think of themselves as being rooted in a place and thus derive their identity from that rootedness. In her view, the roots in question are not just any kind of roots. Often times these roots are arborescent in form.

The theory could not deal with other important areas of protected area establishment such as the legal aspect. What are the various modes of land acquisition for protected areas and to what extent these are consistent with traditional customs and practices. These are areas that the theoretical perspectives presented in this study were unable to cover. These theoretical limitations are areas I challenge others to undertake further research on.

6.2 The Way Forward

It has been argued that conflict of any kind is natural in every human society. Conflicts are thus bound to happen. What is important is how potentially explosive conflicts are managed to avert any dangerous outcome. As I have argued throughout this study, the conflict in Kakum has serious implications at the local, regional and national levels. The threat to the sustainability of the Kakum national park is imminent and requires serious attention from Government, NGOs and civil society groups. All of these groups have a

stake in ensuring that the institutions of state put in place adequate policies or measures to help in dealing with conflicting situations. To this end, there are a number of recommendations which, in my opinion, can help to alleviate the conflict situation and help avoid future conflicts in protected areas in the country.

It is important to note that my recommendations would not be new since most of them have been recurring on various international platforms such as the Bali conference that I have referred to throughout this study. For instance, issues of pursuing conservation with development, participation and granting access to indigenous people living in protected area were identified as far back as in 1982 when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held its maiden meeting on the theme; National Parks, Conservation and Development. What has been lacking over the years is the problem of implementation. Though policymakers are aware as far as these aspects of conservation are concerned, I am of the view that there is the lack of will. In spite of this obvious disregard for implementation of such policy, it is still important to reecho them.

Park officials need to change their orientation from seeing local people as threat to the environment to seeing them as partners in conservation. This requires a complete overhaul of management's perception of local people and their relationship with the environment. This change of the perception of park officials can be done through seminars and workshops with some of the elders of the town participating. Local people can also contribute meaningfully to the development of the park but they also need a change of perception.

If Local people would change their perception of park officials, this would require education of the local people. The process of education can take various forms; community meetings, discussions in schools, churches *et cetera*. This would help create awareness among local people on the need for conservation. Intensive education is also required among local people about the need for conservation. This is not to say that local people have no knowledge about the need for conservation but modern approaches to conservation such as protected area creation must be imbibed in them. This way, mutual suspicion is avoided. Apart from education on conservation, the people of Mfuom and

Abrafo need education to come out of the doldrums of poverty. To this end, an education fund can be set up where a percentage of the revenue accrued to the park can be paid into.

In cases where local people are allowed to take vital products from the Kakum forest, it should not be at the discretion of only park officials. There must be well laid down procedures through which a person can acquire things from the park. Both officials of the park and local people must design this procedure. Having done this, the procedure must be known to all. When the mechanism for taking things from the park is this transparent, I believe that local people would be less prone to stealing from the park and this would minimize conflicts. I say this because it would avoid situations where local people invade the park offices to threaten park officials for arresting locals.

The Park's decision-making processes should be participatory. Opinion leaders of the area must be actively involved in the management of the park. Representatives can also be appointed to a board or a committee where they discuss issues affecting people in the area. Problems occurring between local people and management can also be taken up at such meetings. Since there are different modes of participation, I suggest that the most appropriate form of participation be applied. It could be passive, joint, collaborative *et cetera*. Local people in fact can play an important role in the management of the Kakum national park. For instance, young men in the area can be organized into watchdog committees who would report cases of poaching and illegal hunting instead of employing park guards with guns which is not being effective. Local people must be actively incorporated into the management of the Kakum national park. This way, local people would see themselves as stakeholders of the projects and are likely to participate in the day to day running of the park. This, they can do by acting as whistle-blowers to any poaching attempts.

Issues of compensation must be seriously taken up by the park's authorities. The excuse of not wanting to set precedence is not an adequate explanation. Issues of crop raiding must be well investigated by a joint committee of local people and managers of the park and the appropriate compensation paid. If elephants from the park come to destroy people's property in the town, it is only humane that the affected people are compensated for the damage caused to their property. Farmers whose farms are destroyed

can also be assisted to recover from the cost; through the provision of seedlings for replanting or with funds if it becomes necessary.

It is also important that park officials take a look at how local people can benefit from the revenue that accrues to the park. Here again, the excuse of avoidance of precedence is an inadequate explanation. Some percentage of the revenue can go into the provision of certain amenities like market, schools and recreational areas for the local people. As mentioned above, an education fund can be set up for to assist children through their education. I believe (and most of my tourist informants also agree) that local people must be beneficiaries of the revenue that accrue to the park. Giving money directly to local people may not be advisable but there's no doubt about the fact that local people must have their share of the revenue.

I contend that the above recommendation would fail to work if poverty situation in area is not reduced. Local people must be engaged in activities that would make their lives better off. Thus, the idea of pursuing conservation with development must be given practical expression at the local level. Conservation with development must not just be a political slogan that is reflected in policy. Practical steps must be taken to develop communities where parks are situated. Mfuom and Abrafo are areas where conservation officials have the potential of giving expression to conservation with development. Income generating activities can be identified and actively pursued. This would not only reduce land use problems but can also improve the lives of local people. This way, conservation officials would be killing several birds with one stone. Local women can be mobilized to formalize and effectively produce their local medicine from the elephant dung. They can also be assisted to source funds for expansion once they have formed small units. Palm oil cultivation is another area where local women can be helped to produce on a large scale since the area is good for palm cultivation.

When the above recommendations are carried out, I believe it may not totally solve the problems since human-environment relations are always in a flux. Nevertheless, these recommendations would contribute to minimizing any potential conflict that might erupt in future.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Elites Interviewees (Managers of the park, government officials and official of some NGOs)

- a. How would you define the environment?
- b. What do you think of the national park idea?
- c. To what extent do you consider the environment to be in crisis?
- d. What is the history behind the park?
- e. How is the park managed?
- f. What problems are faced by the management?
- g. To what extent are the local inhabitants involved in the management of the park?
- h. To what extent does the park affect the people living around the park?
- i. Have there been cases of conflicts and if so, what forms have they taken?
- j. What are the sources of these conflicts?
- k. How does the park meet the basic needs of the people?
- l. What religious or cultural activities are undertaken in the park?
- m. What is the ethical basis for establishing the park?
- n. Why has conservation with development not trickled down to the local people

Local People

- a. How was the park created
- b. How was the land acquired
- c. What are the terms?
- d. How do you feel about national parks?
- e. Are you allowed to go into the national parks?
- f. What rituals do you perform in the park before or even now?
- g. How are you involved in the management of the park?
- h. Have there been conflicts of any sort and if there so what form did it take?
- i. If you had your own way, would you maintain the park and why?

- j. Do you believe in Asase yaa? How does the belief in Asase yaa help protect the environment?
- k. What do you consider as the environment?
- l. What relationship do you have with the environment?
- m. How can one come by the knowledge of this relationship?
- n. How many local people are working in the park?
- o. How relevant would you say are taboos in contemporary times?
- p. How have your traditional customs and practices been affected?

Tourists

- a. What do you think of the national park?
- b. Why do you visit the park?
- c. How often do you visit the park?
- d. Are you aware of the conflicts generated by the park and the threats facing the park?
- e. In the light of the problems facing the park, do you think that national parks are sustainable?

Government Officials

- a. What are some of the problems encountered in the creation of national parks in Ghana?
- b. Are you aware of the problems in Kakum and the conflict thereof?
- c. What steps have been taken to address them?
- d. Would you recommend other policies as an alternative?
- e. How come conservation with development has not reflected at the local level?
- f. How does the government intend to alleviate poverty through the national park in Kakum?